Karidat toy drive, fundraising net $6.5K. PAGE 5
Saipan joins 'wave of light' ceremony. PAGE 6

Hafa Adai!

Saipan Tribune

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2 killed, 3 hurt in car crash

By FERDIE DE LA TORRE
ferdie_delatorre@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

» Prior to collision, another car also crashed into traffic barrier at Thousand Curve

Two persons were killed and three others were injured during a vehicular accident on Chalan Pale Arnold Road in As Mahetog on Sunday before dawn.

Department of Public Safety spokesman Jason Tarkong said yesterday that the fatalities were a 21-year-old woman and a 20-year-old man,

See KILLED on Page 4

Car overturns in 40-minute car chase

By FERDIE DE LA TORRE
ferdie_delatorre@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

» Cops learn that suspect also stole a van, license plates, other items

An ex-convict engaged police officers in a 40-minute car chase Friday night that ended when the car hit an embankment and overturned in Koblerville.

The incident went viral after a bystander took a video of a police officer hitting the suspect, Vincent San Nicolas Norita, repeatedly as he lay on the ground.

Police said that Norita's car, a white 2011 Toyota Yaris four-door sedan with license plate ADZ-841, was speeding and nearly hit several pedestri-

See CAR on Page 4

TOY DRIVE MICHAEL T. SANTOS
Members of Karidat Social Services collect toys during Guma Esperanza's annual Toy Drive held in the Veterans of Foreign Wars Office in Garapan on Dec. 11.

See story on Page 5

Kilili optimistic of GAO report

U.S. Government Accountability Office assistant director/ senior economist Emil Friberg Jr., Ph.D., addresses members of the Saipan Chamber of Commerce in last week's general membership meeting at the Royal Taga Hall of the Saipan World Resort.
JON PEREZ

RELATED NEWS
➤ US Senate fails to pass increase in CW numbers. PAGE 3

By JON PEREZ
jon_perez@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

Delegate Gregorio Kilili C. Sablan (Ind-MP) is pinning his hopes on the results of the investigation being done by the U.S. Government Accountability Office, with the report going to Congress to help them consider changes in immigration and labor issues that would affect

See KILILI on Page 4

Hocog motion to dismiss suit found moot

By FERDIE DE LA TORRE
ferdie_delatorre@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

A federal judge has found moot acting governor Victor Hocog's motion to dismiss Japanese investor Takahisa Yamamoto's lawsuit against him and some owners of M/V *Luta*.

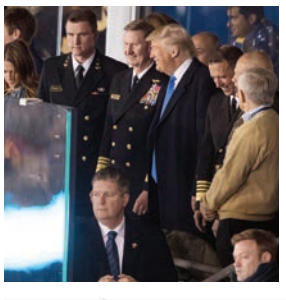
U.S. District Court for the NMI designated Judge Frances Tydingco-Gatewood issued the order yesterday after Yamamoto filed an amended complaint against Hocog and his co-defendants.

Tydingco-Gatewood noted that in several paragraphs, Yamamoto's first amended complaint alleges that Hocog made specific materially false statements that induced Yamamoto to provide funding for M/V *Luta*.

"Thus on its face, the first

See HOCOG on Page 4

INSIDE



NATION
Donald Trump calls a recent CIA assessment of Russian hacking "ridiculous."
PAGE 14

ASIA
There's nothing flashy about former finance minister and farmer Bill English.
PAGE 16

WORLD
Coalition forces have killed or gravely wounded more than 2,000 IS fighters.
PAGE 17

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Local

CK post office building named after fallen heroes

WASHINGTON, D.C.—The men and women of the Mariana Islands who lost their lives during the war on terrorism will be honored by having the U.S. Post Office in Chalan Kanoa named after them.

Legislation authored by Delegation Gregorio Kilili C. Sablan (Ind-MP) and honoring the servicemembers passed the U.S. Senate in the early hours of Saturday and will soon be transmitted to President Obama for signature into law.

Sablan's legislation, H.R. 5889, also recognizes Segundo T. Sablan, Saipan's first U.S. postmaster.

"Nothing we can ever say or do will return our loved ones, who died long before their time while serving their country," Sablan said. "I can only hope that this act of recognition—naming the Chalan Kanoa Post Office in their honor—will give some measure of comfort and pride to those families who lost their sons and daughters during recent years."

Upon enactment of the legislation, the CK facility will be officially named the Segundo T. Sablan and CNMI Fallen Military Heroes Post Office Building.

Segundo Sablan was himself a military hero, having assisted U.S. forces during World War II as they fought to take control of the island of Saipan from the Japanese. Sablan was also the first Chamorro to be appointed a U.S. postmaster in 1951.

"The people of the Northern Marianas have a proud history of military service that began long before we were officially part of the United States and continues to this day," Sablan explained during the debate on his bill in the House of Representatives on Sept. 20. ***(PR)***

PEOPLE'S CHOICE CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

Department of Public Safety's The Grinch bagged first place in first lady Diann Torres' A Christmas Village People's Choice Award. In this photo, representatives of DPS pose with their winning prize and trophy.

Sablan clarifies stance on Zoning hearing

By ERWIN ENCINARES
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REPORTER

The Dec. 1 public hearing of the Commonwealth Zoning board has upset some Koblerville residents because of the distance of the venue to the village when part of the agenda was about a rezoning permit for construction in the village.

The last Zoning board public hearing was held at the Gregorio T. Camacho Elementary School with the agenda of addressing a rezoning application in San Roque, Sadog Tasi, and Koblerville.

Residents of Koblerville were disappointed by the venue choice, which, according to Zoning board chair Diego Blanco, was requested by Rep. Vinson Sablan (Ind-Saipan) himself.

"I didn't request for that specific zoning proposal on that agenda to be held at GTC," said Sablan right off the bat.

Though it was true that Sablan asked for the San Roque proposal to be decided upon in San Roque, he did not specifically request for the Koblerville proposal to be decided in San Roque, he said.

"If the agenda pertained to the northern side of the island, then it would be proper to say that we want that discussion to be done at the northern side of the island. For the Koblerville proposal, I didn't tell anybody that it should be held at GTC. What happened was these proposals were clumped into one and it so happened that one of them was pertaining to San Roque, which was why it was held at GTC," said Sablan.

Sablan said that the Legislature has no authority over where Zoning conducts its public hearings.

"If they clump items into the agenda together, then we have no control over where it's going to be. They could've held that specific zoning proposal at Koblerville Elementary School, but then the San Roque rezoning would be in that agenda and it would be the other way around," he said.

Sablan said that according to current law, "there is no requirement [for the location of the Zoning public hearing]. Zoning could have it anywhere else. For this actual instance, I am not the one that requested for [the Koblerville proposal] to be held at San Roque."

"The reason why [Blanco] referred to me was because there were San Roque decisions to be made on the northern side," said Sablan.

Jack Muña, a resident of Koblerville, was against the venue decision and was unable to attend because of this.

"I complained to the Zoning board office [about the last public hearing]," he said.

"They should've held it here in Koblerville, not in San Roque."

"The reason why they don't have many [attendees] is because they made the wrong decision to hold it in San Roque. If they would've done it here in Kobler, a lot of people could've just walked to attend the meeting," said Muña.

Muña said, like a lot of fellow residents of Kobler, that he was interested in attending the public hearing but changed his mind due to the time and place.

"I was going to show up, but I didn't go because I was worried about driving at night. My eyesight is not really good," he said.

Ramon "RB" Camacho, a resident of Koblerville and board chair of the Board of Parole, agreed with Sablan.

"I think it's more sound to conduct a hearing near the area that is going to be developed. Call the people [near the area], because they are the ones closer to the development," said Camacho.

"I think it is more appropriate, for me, to hear about the people within that area because they are the ones affected if there are any problems or they are the ones that benefit if the developer is expanding," added Camacho.

Sablan said that he introduced HB 19-190 earlier this year to require zoning public hearings to be near the proposed location of rezoning.

Sablan plans to reintroduce the bill during the 20th Legislature.

Water outages in Oleai, CK

Residents of Oleai and Chalan Kanoa will experience a temporary water service interruption starting on Wednesday, Dec.14, through Dec. 23. The interruptions will be daily from 3am to 5am,as part of an ongoing leak detection program, which will affect the respective areas at this time. For more information, contact the Commonwealth Utilities Cop. Customer Call Center at 664-4282. ***(PR)***

Tourism Topics
A weekly update from the Marianas Visitors Authority
Tourism is everybody's business.
Saipan Tinian Rota
HAFA ADAI & TIROW WAY

Seoul Metro Bus Advertising

To increase awareness of the Northern Mariana Islands as the best tour destination for FITs, the Marianas Visitors Authority (MVA) has conducted a co-op advertising campaign with Naeil Tour on the Seoul metro bus system.

A special ad promoting the NMI has been displayed on 50 buses running five major lines in the Seoul metropolitan area. Also, Naeil Tour featured a special online page as a call-to-action, using its website as a sales tool to attract consumers during the ad campaign period, which ended on Saturday (Dec. 10). During the campaign, over 200 consumers Northern Marianas tour products via Naeil Tour, a 41 percent increase compared to the same period last year.

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US Senate fails to pass increase in CW numbers

WASHINGTON, D.C.—The U.S. Senate adjourned Friday without passing legislation increasing CW nonimmigrant worker permits in the Marianas for 2017. Delegate Gregorio Kilili C. Sablan (Ind-MP) was able to get his bill, providing a one-year lift in the CW cap, through the House on Tuesday. But a hold on all bills in the Senate by Sen. Joe Manchin (D-West Virginia) and objections to passage of immigration legislation from the Senate Judiciary Committee blocked action on Sablan's bill in the final working hours of the 114th Congress.

"We were very fortunate to have been able to build bipartisan support in the House for legislation dealing with immigration—and win passage without any dissent," Sablan reflected in the early hours of Saturday, as the Senate wrapped up.

"Immigration is one of the most difficult issues to manage in Congress, even if the direct effect of any legislation is confined just to the Mariana Islands, as was the case with the bill I got through the House this week. For that reason, even though we were successful in the House, I have been very cautious about raising hopes back home.

"As is always the case here in Washington, persistence is the key to accomplishment. And we are already planning on what next steps we can take when the 115th Congress convenes on Jan. 3."

One factor that will come into play is a report expected this month from the Section 902 Consultations between Gov. Ralph DLG Torres and Special Representative of the President Esther Kia'aina. A congressionally mandated review of the labor situation in the Marianas by the Government Accountability Office due in April will also influence future decision-making.

"I do want to thank Gov. [Ralph DLG] Torres and Senate President [Francisco] Borja, the Saipan Chamber of Commerce, the Hotel Association of the Northern Mariana Islands, [Strategic Economic Development Council], and the Commonwealth Healthcare Center, all of whom provided support for passage of my bill, H.R. 6401, in the House this week," Sablan said.

"I hope to continue to be able to demonstrate that same unity as we move forward on finding a better system of providing sufficient labor for the Marianas economy."

Sablan's bill raised the cap on CW foreign workers from the current 12,998 back to the 2013 level of 15,000, but only for the current year. His bill also barred the use of the CW permits for new construction jobs, which caused the cap to be reached almost as soon as the application period opened this October. H.R. 6401 also raised the fee that employers must pay to help train local workers to replace foreign workers in the Marianas economy.

"There may have been lobbyists at work for special interests that want to save money by using CWs for temporary construction labor," Sablan said, "or who do not want to pay more to train our local workers."

"And it is always easier to block a bill than to get a bill enacted.

"That is one more reason to maintain a unified voice among our Marianas elected officials and our community at large, as we continue our efforts in the year ahead." ***(PR)***

Put people's interests first—Vinnie

By JON PEREZ
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REPORTER

Rep. Vinson E. Sablan (Ind-Saipan) called on his colleagues in the incoming 20th Legislature to always think of the welfare of their constituents when writing bills or making amendments. Inauguration is on Jan. 9. Sablan represents Precinct 3 with rookie lawmaker Alice Igitol (R-Saipan).

Sablan said the five-member independent minority is willing to work with the GOP super majority. The Republicans won 15 seats in the House of Representatives in the last general election in November and controls the Senate with seven seats.

"They have the numbers and we're [minority] hoping to work closely with them. But the bottom line is we should handle the issues appropriately and to the best interest of the people," Sablan told *Saipan Tribune*.

The GOP super majority has already settled the House leadership, with Rep. Rafael S. Demapan keeping the House speakership. Representative-elect Janet U. Maratita will be vice speaker, while Rep. Glenn L. Maratita of Rota will be the floor leader. Rep. Edmund S. Villagomez (Ind-Saipan) is the minority leader as agreed upon by his four colleagues.

"Certain issues that might be controversial must go through a certain process. Where voting could be done fairly and not just because of the party, we must ensure the community is part of the process. Let their voices be heard through public hearings," said Sablan.

"It would be a lot smoother because if they all agree on some issues they have the votes, they have the numbers. We must be proponents of the community first. Even though they [people] were the ones who voted for us, they must also be part of the process as well. [They] community must also be aware and be informed of what issues would affect them."

He remains positive in the incoming Legislature, especially with the new members. "We all have the same intention of doing what's right for the people. We must lead by example to get the work done and see what issues should be discussed."

Despite the minority not being offered committee chairmanships or memberships, Sablan said he would do his best if asked to be part of a particular committee.

"No, we have not gotten any offers or requests to chair any committees. I don't expect to. But there's more you could do with the issues as a chair in a committee."

"I would do my part to help out. If they want me to be in a particular committee and if I'm comfortable with it then I'll be part of it. But if I see that it is not my expertise, I will see if I could join it or see if I would be offered another committee," he added.

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KILLED

From Page 1

both Chamorros.

Tarkong said the woman was the driver of a white 2010 Toyota Corolla, while the man was one of her three passengers.

The two other female passengers—20 years old and 21 years old, both Chamorros—were injured and taken to the Commonwealth Health Center.

A 41-year-old Korean man, the driver of a white 2015 Ford Transit 350 XL van, was injured and treated at CHC's emergency room.

Tarkong said that speed and alcohol were factors in the crash.

The crash, reported to police on Sunday at 4:30am, happened on the southbound lane of Chalan Pale Arnold Road in As Mahetog in between the intersection to Saipan Zoo and Saipan Ice and Water Co.

Tarkong said investigation showed that the Toyota Corolla car was travelling north when it lost control, crossed the divider, and collided with the van, which was traveling south in the opposite direction.

First responders requested a Department of Fire and Emergency Medical Services ambulance, rescue and tow trucks, and a DPS traffic investigator to the scene.

When the first responders arrived, the car was facing east on the southbound lane and its left side had extensive damage. The van, which had moderate damage to its front, was still attached to the car's left side.

Medics rushed all victims to CHC. A doctor pronounced the male passenger dead at 5:15am while another doctor pronounced the driver of the car dead at CHC's intensive care unit at 8:56am.

While police have yet to release the identities of the fatalities, it was reported that the female driver was a Northern Marianas College student. In a statement, NMC president Dr. Carmen Fernandez said: "On behalf of Northern Marianas College, we are just really saddened about what has happened. Our prayers and our hearts go out to her family. NMC is willing to help out in whatever way we can."

At the crash scene, police learned that another white 2010 Toyota Corolla four-door sedan crashed into the traffic barrier by the sharp curve—also known as Thousand Curve in Sadog Tasi—just seconds prior to the As Mahetog accident. The Thousand Curve is located near the As Mahetog crash scene.

Tarkong said the white 2010 Toyota Corolla car in Sadog Tasi crash was racing with the other white 2010 Toyota Corolla that collided with the van.

The car made its way to the Sadog Tasi Mobil gas station. Police responded and interviewed a witness, the driver and two passengers of the car.

Tarkong said the driver and the two passengers, all Carolinian male teenagers, were arrested on charges of minor consuming liquor and open can display. The three were not injured.

An additional charge of driving while under the influence of alcohol was also filed against the 17-year-old driver as his breath test results indicated he was over the legal limit. He was also charged with reckless driving, speeding, failure to maintain right half lane, racing on the highway, and providing false report to police.

Tarkong said one passenger is 17 years old while the other passenger is 18 years old.

Tarkong said eyewitness stated that both Toyota cars were seen racing with each other and they nearly caused the eyewitness' vehicle to crash.

Tarkong said speed and alcohol were also factors in the Sadog Tasi crash.

Acting governor Victor Hocog recently signed a proclamation declaring December as CNMI Drunk, Drugged, Drowsy and Distracted Driving Prevention Month.

In the proclamation, DPS said so far, there have been 1,730 vehicular crashes in the CNMI this year and 62 of them were alcohol-related, resulting in one-traffic fatality. Sunday's incident was not included in that statistics.

CAR

From Page 1

ans during the pursuit.

Norita, 31, walked on crutches when taken before Superior Court Associate Judge Joseph N. Camacho yesterday for a bail hearing on charges of theft of a vehicle, causing accidents, reckless driving, eluding a police officer, and receiving stolen items.

Camacho imposed a $50,000 cash bail on Norita; preliminary hearing is on Dec. 22 at 9am. Chief Public Defender Douglas Hartig will represent Norita.

A bystander's video showing a police officer repeatedly hitting with a baton a person on the ground beside the overturned car immediately went viral on social media. Some officers were also seen rushing to the scene.

Norita's passenger, Joe E. Ada, was arrested for possession of a controlled substance.

Department of Public Safety spokesman Jason Tarkong said the matter is now being investigated by both the Department of Public Safety Internal Affairs Unit and the Office of the Attorney General Investigation Division.

"AGID is the lead agency in this ongoing investigation," Tarkong said.

Tarkong said police investigation showed that on Friday at 10:15pm, a DPS police officer saw Norita's car travelling at a high speed on the outer northbound lane of Beach Road near the Saipan Mayor's Office in Chalan Laulau.

The officer followed the car, which continued speeding up to 60 miles an hour on Beach Road, passing three cars on the right shoulder near Horiguchi Building and failing to yield to police car sirens and emergency lights.

Once it reached Garapan, the car continued speeding, weaving in and out of the village and tourist hotel streets. Some pedestrians were nearly hit.

Norita then drove the car north on Chalan Pale Arnold Road (Middle Road), speeding up to 100 miles an hour, passing the former branch of Bank of Hawaii in Puerto Rico and going north toward the Sadog Tasi sharp curve.

Police pursued the car, which proceeded to Tanapag Village, then back to Chalan Pale Arnold Road, and back south on Chalan Pale Arnold Road. The car allegedly made several unsafe lane changes, almost causing vehicular accidents and nearly hitting pedestrians, according to police.

The car then made a left turn from Chalan Pale Arnold Road onto Isa Drive, continued east up As Terlaje Hill, then made a right turn south on Martinez Road, and a right turn west on Tun Joaquin Road in Finasisu.

The car drove recklessly in and out of village streets in Chalan Kanoa to avoid pursuing police cars, police said.

The car then drove back to the hill, proceeded east on Tun Joaquin Doi Road and went south to Koblerville, where it lost control, hit an embankment and overturned near the old airport runway east of Hannam Market.

Police arrested Norita and Ada at the scene at 10:57pm. The police report did not mention how many police cars and officers were involved in the chase. The report also did not indicate if Norita and Ada were injured.

Traffic investigator Norris Kwon stated in his report that last Tuesday, Dec. 6, at 8:06am, he and other police officers responded to a crash incident along As Perdido Road by the intersection to Dr. Torres Drive in Chalan Kanoa.

Kwon said he learned that a vehicle with license plate AEC 911 fled the scene after hitting a pickup truck with license plate ABP 795.

That same day, a witness directed Kwon to the location of the car with license plate AEC 911 which had been abandoned. Its driver side window was wide open, the doors unsecured, and the key was still in the ignition.

The car, with license plate AEC 911, was found to have been stolen from Lei Rent A Car last Dec. 2. Inside the car, Kwon found two original license plate number ACR 746 for that vehicle, based on the vehicle identification number.

Kwon said he found a U.S. passport, Saipan Mayor's Office's identification, CNMI birth certificate, Bank of Hawaii savings book, and a Bank of Guam Visa debit card, which all belong to Norita.

Kwon also found inside the car more license plates and a 1996 Lexus owner's manual and other documents for a car with license plate ACP 538. The car's registered owner is July B. Magat. The items were reported stolen last Oct. 31.

Kwon also found inside the car a front license plate bracket, owner's manual bag, jack, and tool belonging to a Ford Econoline 15-passenger van.

Kwon said Jeju Airlines Lounge filed a theft of vehicle complaint last Dec. 1 after their Ford Econoline van bearing license plate ACL 654 was stolen.

The investigator said he found inside the car a Bank of America Visa credit card, a Bank of Hawaii ATM card, and a Bank of Hawaii American Express credit card belonging to Tom Schweiger.

Schweiger filed a burglary and theft complaint with DPS last Nov. 30 at his residence.

Kwon said that on that same day, Dec. 6, a confidential informant disclosed that Norita was in possession of a white Toyota Yaris with license plate AEC 911 that struck the pickup truck on As Perdido Road.

The confidential informant also revealed that Norita was hiding a stolen white long van in his farm lot by Flame Tree Road.

Armed with a search warrant, Kwon and detectives searched Norita's farm that afternoon of Dec. 6 and located the stolen Ford Econoline.

Kwon said they observed that another license plate, BUS 1295, was attached to the rear of the stolen Ford Econoline.

Kwon said that morning, another victim came to DPS and filed a complaint of theft of license plate BUS 1295.

Inside the van, police recovered a sweatshirt belonging to Norita and tools such as multiple bolt cutters, hydraulic jack, multiple car keys, and door keys.

KILILI

From Page 1

the Commonwealth.

GAO representatives, led by assistant director/senior economist Emil Friberg, Ph.D., spent more than a week on Saipan, with Sablan saying that they looked into the economic impact of the staggered minimum wage increases in the last three years.

"The report is mandated by the federal law that established the federal control of minimum wage in the Marianas," Sablan told *Saipan Tribune* in an email. He added GAO's previous reports were useful to him in adjusting the pace of the wage increases in the last eight years.

The report also assured him that wages went up as quickly as possible without reducing employment. "[We] continue to anticipate the federal minimum wage increases, such as the increase to $6.55 per hour [last] September and to $7.05 next year. [It] will be good for workers and the Marianas economy as a whole," Sablan said

Congress has asked GAO, whose visit to the CNMI was made possible by Sablan being a vice ranking member of the House Natural Resources Committee, to also review and make a report on the CNMI's labor situation as stated in a letter to U.S. Comptroller General Eugene Louis Dodaro, CGFM.

Both Senate Energy Committee chair Sen. Lisa Murkowski (R-Alaska) and Sen. Maria Cantwell (D-WA), who is also a ranking member of the committee and chair of the Senate Small Business Committee, are also co-signatories in the letter to Dodaro.

Congress has requested GAO to report on the effectiveness of federal and Commonwealth government programs to train U.S. citizens that will be replacing foreign workers in the CNMI. Sablan and the two senators also want an assessment on the possible economic impact of ending the CNMI-Only Transitional Worker Nonimmigrant Visa program in 2019.

The legislators also requested the government and private sectors to provide examples of their efforts to recruit U.S. eligible workers and look for models the Commonwealth could use.

A longer version of this story is available at www. saipantribune.com

HOCOG

From Page 1

amended complaint is responsive to the motion," the judge said.

Tydingco-Gatewood vacated the hearing on Hocog's motion set for Dec. 15. She ordered Hocog and co-defendants to respond to the first amended complaint.

Yamamoto, through counsel George Lloyd Hasselback, filed the original lawsuit against Hocog and some owners of M/V *Luta* for allegedly refusing to pay back the $3,399,000 that he funded for the vessel.

Yamamoto's original complaint only used "certain defendants" to describe those engaged in the dealings.

Hocog recently filed a motion asking the court to dismiss Yamamoto's lawsuit.

Hocog, through Guam-based counsel Jeffrey A. Moots, asserted that there is nothing to indicate that he participated in any of the allegations.

Last Dec. 1, Yamamoto filed his first amended complaint that directly named Hocog, who as then-Rota senator, allegedly promised to use his political position and influence to ensure that his investment in the M/V *Luta* was returned with profit.

Yamamoto's amended complaint has the same set of defendants and claims—breach of contract, fraud, and unjust enrichment.

In her order yesterday, Tydingco-Gatewood said Hocog asserts that the complaint fails to accuse him of any specific conduct that would support a charge of fraud.

The judge said Hocog's name appears only in the caption and in one paragraph, which merely identifies him as a U.S. citizen who resides on Rota.

Aside from Hocog, Yamamoto is also suing M/V *Luta*, Luta Mermaid LLC, Abelina T. Mendiola, Deron T. Mendiola, Fidel S. Mendiola III, Fidel Mendiola Jr., and Robert Toelkes. Luta Mermaid LLC owns M/V *Luta.*

According to Hasselback in the lawsuit, Abelina Mendiola, Deron Mendiola, and Fidel Mendiola III are managers/shareholders of Luta Mermaid.

A longer version of this story is available at www. saipantribune.com

MICHAEL T. SANTOS
Members of Karidat Social Services collect toys accumulated with the help of Navy ships during Guma Esperanza's annual Toy Drive held in the Veterans of Foreign Wars office in Garapan on Dec. 11.

Karidat toy drive and fundraising net $6.5K

By MICHAEL T SANTOS
michael.santos@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

The shelter for abused women and children, Guma Esperanza, and the Karidat Social Services received a total of about $6,500 in donations during a toy drive held at the Veterans of Foreign Wars office in Garapan last Sunday.

Organized by COMPSRON 3 and PREPO ships masters, Navy shipmen went from ship to ship to raise money for the shelter. Using the money collected, toys were bought for the children and the remaining funds were used as cash donations.

Lauri Ogumuro, executive director for Karidat, said, "This is always a fun and touching event. It started many years ago and the tradition of buying gifts for the children at the shelter just kept on going. It's a beautiful way of giving back to the community and to the women and children who are victims of domestic violence. We are just overwhelmed by everyone's generosity."

By the end of the event, Karidat received 124 toys for the children under its care.

"For the men and women who are on the ships and are far away from their families, it helps them give back to the community and get them in the spirit of the holidays despite the distance. It kind of touches them and gives them the true meaning of the season," Ogumuro said.

James Toy, captain of the MV *Major Bernard F. Fisher*, said, "For a lot of these kids, the gifts we deliver to them may just be the only present they get for Christmas. As for the event, I think it worked out just as well as I thought it would. We raised a considerable amount of money and at least the kids will have a little bit of Christmas this year."

Toy coordinated between ships, squadron, and Guma Esperanza to help make the event possible.

"This whole event is for the women and children of this island. It is for the local community. We are talking about a battered women's shelter where women who have been abused go to seek refuge. They're coming in from a rough situation, so events like this kind of lightens the load for them," Toy said. "Ambyth [Shipping] did a lot of the legwork. They got the haul and provided transportation as well as made a contribution to the fund."

Cost lowered for Army Corps plans

WASHINGTON, D.C.—A provision to lower the local cost-share for the Commonwealth, championed by Delegate Gregorio Kilili C. Sablan (Ind-MP), has passed the House and Senate and should be signed into law by President Obama soon. The language, contained in Section 1129 of the Water Resources Development Act of 2016, expands the existing local-cost waiver of $455,000 for Army Corps of Engineers work in the Marianas and other U.S. insular areas to include development plans.

"Language I added to the Water Resources Reform and Development Act of 2014 required the Army Corps to adjust the local-cost waiver to account for inflation over the two decades since the insular area waiver was first established at $200,000," Sablan explained.

"My adjustment more than doubled the amount that the Commonwealth does not have to pay as a local cost-share for Corps studies and construction projects to $455,000.

"And we have already benefited from that reduction in local costs for the work the Corps is doing on the Rota and Tinian harbors.

"But the Corps subsequently determined additional statutory language was needed to apply the waiver to development plans. So we had to make the further adjustment in the law, which is now on its way to the President."

In October Sablan wrote a letter, which other insular area members of Congress whose districts the waiver also benefits signed on to, asking the House Transportation and Infrastructure Committee to expand the areas of work covered by the $455,000 waiver.

And the House Committee did as asked, making the change in the conference report on the Water Resources Development Act of 2016 negotiated with the Senate.

Sablan extended his thanks to Chairman Bill Shuster (R-Pennsylvania) and Ranking Member Peter DeFazio (D-Oregon) of the Transportation and Infrastructure Committee and also to Hawaii Sen. Mazie K. Hirono (D) who identified the problem and also worked for a fix. ***(PR)***

NOTICE OF AVAILABILITY RECORD OF DECISION

FOR THE
DIVERT ACTIVITIES AND EXERCISES,
COMMONWEALTH OF THE NORTHERN MARIANA ISLANDS
FINAL ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT STATEMENT

On December 7, 2016 EST/December 8, 2016 ChST, the U.S. Air Force (USAF) signed the Record of Decision (ROD) for the Divert Activities and Exercises, Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands (CNMI) Final Environmental Impact Statement (EIS). The Final EIS was made available to the public on September 26, 2016 EDT/September 27, 2016 ChST through a Notice of Availability in the Federal Register (Federal Register Vol. 81, page 66013) with a 30-day wait period. The Final EIS and signed ROD are available for download on the project website address listed below.

The signed ROD states the USAF decision to implement the preferred alternative, Alternative 2- Modified Tinian Alternative, and specifically the North Option, as the location to construct the facilities and infrastructure needed to achieve divert capabilities in the western Pacific and conduct military exercises. The decision in the ROD was based on mission, national security policy, operational, environmental, economic and technical factors; environmental impacts as analyzed in the Final EIS; input from the public and government agencies; and other relevant factors. The USAF recognized input from the public, regulatory and other agencies, and CNMI stakeholders that stated a preference for the Modified Tinian Alternative. The USAF selected the North Option of the Modified Tinian Alternative over the South Option to minimize interference with other CNMI and commercial activities that are under consideration or could be proposed on the south side of the airport. The USAF also selected the Modified Tinian Alternative North Option based on the analysis of cumulative impacts from Department of Defense proposals within the CNMI.

This Notice of Availability for the ROD is published pursuant to the regulations (40 CFR Sec 1506.6) implementing the provisions of the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969 (42 U.S.C. 4321, et seq.) and the USAF's Environmental Impact Analysis Process (32 CFR 989.21(b) and 989.24(b)(7)).

Documents may be downloaded or viewed online at: www.PACAFDivertMarianasEIS.com

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Saipan joins 'wave of light' ceremony

Participants gather with lighted candles to commemorate the memories of loved ones who've passed on during The Compassionate Friends of Saipan's annual candle lighting ceremony at the Garapan Central Park on Dec. 11.

MICHAEL T. SANTOS

By MICAHEL T SANTOS
michael.santos@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

Forming a wave of light from time zone to time zone, groups of people came together worldwide to commemorate loved ones who've passed on during The Compassionate Friends' annual candle-lighting ceremony.

Held on Saipan last Saturday at the Garapan Central Park, the program allowed people who've lost a loved one to come together with others who share the same loss.

Michael Roy Ortizo, a volunteer from Mount Carmel School, said, "A lot of people here came early just to show support. As much as the event was solemn, I still think it went well."

Ortizo explained that MCS has been helping with the event annually. Members from the school arrived on site about four hours prior to the event.

"We have to remember our loved ones, especially those who have passed away. It helps us cherish the moments we have with the people in our lives as well as reminds us that we have so many blessings," Ortizo said.

Jill Derickson, founder of The Compassionate Friends chapter on island, said: "We're a support group, so we know what it's like to lose someone like that. The outside world often doesn't understand; they think the grief would go away in a month at most and for people to just get over it. People don't get over things like this quickly."

The Compassionate Friends is a national mutual assistance, self-help organization that offers friendship, understanding and support to family members who have experienced the death of a son, daughter, brother, sister, grandchild, or friend, and helps others better assist grieving families.

"We hold events like this at the end of the year because the holidays tend to make it very hard for people who have lost a child or sibling. They don't want to go out, be merry, or see the bright lights. This is our way to acknowledge the people who have passed and maintain their memory," Derickson said. "It's sad to lose a mother or grandparent but those things are natural, it's supposed to happen. To lose a child, however, how does a person get over it? It's just unexpected and something unfortunately a lot of people have to carry with them."

This was the 5th annual Candle Lighting Remembrance Program on Saipan, and was a part of The Compassionate Friends' 20th Annual Worldwide Candle Lighting Service.

Approximately 100 candles were lit in remembrance of those who were "gone too soon." Over 70 children and siblings were honored with a candle and memories by their loved ones.

The Compassionate Friends of Saipan would like to thank Eli Cabrera and CNMI Department of Lands and Natural Resources, Division of Parks & Recreation; Blossom Floral; *Marianas Variety*; S*aipan Tribune*; Tina Palacios and Sorensen Media Saipan; KSPN Channel 2; Gary Sword and KKMP; Brianna Hunter, Zeno Camacho Deleon Guerrero, Jr. and the Honor Society and other student volunteers from Mt. Carmel School; Jim Arenovski; and Allan and Lorna Arcega and family.

Saturday's program included two video presentations composed by Dr. Nelson Krum.

The Compassionate Friends of Saipan's monthly meetings are held on the first Thursday of the month, at 6pm in the NMPASI conference room on Middle Road in Gualo Rai. Contact Jill Derickson, 989-9821, Donna Krum, 783-1900, or e-mail TCFSaipan@gmail.com if you are interested in further information.

Guam war reparations waiting for president's signature

HAGATNA, Guam (AP)— Legislation that includes reparations for Guam residents who experienced atrocities during World War II is waiting for President Barack Obama's signature.

The 2017 National Defense Authorization Act that passed in Washington, D.C., on Thursday includes reparations for rape, forced labor and other harmful acts by Japanese occupiers, reported the *Pacific Daily News*.

"The United States recognizes that, as described by the Guam War Claims Review Commission, the residents of Guam, on account of their United States nationality, suffered unspeakable harm as a result of the occupation of Guam by Imperial Japanese military forces during World War II, by being subjected to death, rape, severe personal injury, personal injury, forced labor, forced march, or internment," the bill states.

U.S. military members and federal employees in Guam pay income taxes that go to the territory. Any funds beyond $70 million annually would pay reparations.

"We intend to work with Gov. (Eddie) Calvo to seek appropriations from the Trump Administration that would hold our local treasury harmless," said the office of Guam Delegate Madeleine Bordallo.

Bordallo said she will also collaborate with Sen. Frank Blas Jr. and the Guam War Survivors Memorial Foundation to find ways to prepare residents for the process.

"It is the recognition by the United States government that there was a population, a group of loyal citizens, individuals who really had no say, as far as the war, and they were basically left to fend for themselves," Blas said.

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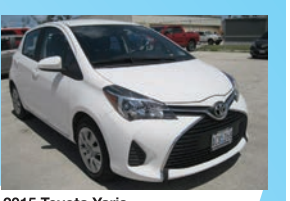

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NMI flags flown at half-staff in honor of Glenn

Acting governor Victor B. Hocog directed yesterday that all flags in the Commonwealth be flown at half-staff in memory of the late John Herschel Glenn Jr., the first American to orbit the Earth and former U.S. senator, in line with President Obama's proclamation signifying a period of mourning.

The CNMI and U.S. flags will be flown at half-staff until the day of Glenn's interment, which has yet to be announced.

Glenn became a national hero in 1962 when he became the first American to orbit the Earth. He then spent 24 years as a Democrat from Ohio in the U.S. Senate. He died Thursday at the age of 95. ***(PR)***

Hocog offers assistance to families on Tinian

Acting governor Victor B. Hocog donated canned goods early this month to Junior Reserve Officers Training Corps cadets on Tinian to assist former contract workers of the Tinian Dynasty Hotel & Casino and over 140 families in need.

In July of this year, dozens of Tinian Dynasty Hotel & Casino employees were without power and on rationed food after months of non-payment and austerity measures.

According to 1SG Jose King, the cadets wanted to help brighten up these ex-employees' Christmas this year through part of their Service Learning Project to make a difference in the community.

" Our JROTC cadets were collecting canned goods donations to help the contract workers…who are currently having trouble gathering resources and also to help brighten up their Christmas this year…they post themselves at three different locations for a couple of hours after school on Wednesdays and Fridays as well as Saturdays. They've also sought assistance from the delegations, Mayor's Office, Bridge Investment Group, and Alter City and are looking at helping approximately 140 families," King said.

"Extending assistance to the families in need, especially during the holiday season, is important. This is a very serious and unfortunate situation and we are working with our federal partners so that we can ensure that a permanent resolution is found so that we can move forward and improve developments throughout the Commonwealth," Hocog said.

All canned goods donations will be consolidated and sorted on Dec. 19 and will be distributed on Dec 21 at Kammer Beach. ***(PR)***

CULTURAL FAIR CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

Middle school students of Whispering Palms School hosted a cultural fair for the rest of the school and parents, featuring the cultures of other countries. In this photo, a couple of students explain what they've learned about the country of El Salvador.

DIABETES TRAINING MICHAEL T. SANTOS

Participants discuss assignments given to them during the Pacific Diabetes Self-Management Education Program Training held at the Pacific Islands Club on Dec 1. The three-day diabetes training program was held from Nov. 29 to Dec. 1.

EOC warns of possible flooding

Based on the information received from the National Weather Service in Tiyan, Guam, and compiled at the CNMI Emergency Operations Center State Warning Point, Doppler radar indicated heavy rain over Rota. The automated rain gauge indicated by 10am yesterday that more than two inches of rain have already fallen for the past three hours.

An urban and small stream flood advisory for Rotais now in effect.

Additional rainfall of 1 to 2 inches are possible over the few hours. This additional rain will likely cause minor flooding in low-lying areas and areas with poor drainage.

A flood advisory means river or stream flows are elevated, or ponding of water in urban or poor drainage areas is occurring or is imminent. These conditions will cause difficult driving conditions and minor flooding along streams and rivers.

People living in a low-lying or flood-prone areas are advised to be prepared for the possibility of flooding on your property over the next few hours. ***(EOC)***

Rota sets sobriety checkpoints

The Department of Public Safety's Traffic Section will be conducting sobriety checkpoints on the dates and time listed below:

■ Thursday, Dec. 22, 2016:

1. First setup: 7pm to 8:15pm, San Francisco Highway, Lotgan area
2. Second setup: 9pm to 10:15pm, San Francisco Highway, Tatachog area
3. Third setup: 11pm to 12:15am, San Francisco Highway, Guata area

■ Friday, Dec. 23, 2016:

1. First setup: 7pm to 8:15pm, San Francisco Highway, Igua area
2. Second setup: 9pm to 10:15pm, San Francisco Highway, Uyulan area
3. Third setup: 11pm to 12:15am, San Francisco Highway, Teteto area

■ Wednesday, Dec. 28, 2016:

1. First setup: 7pm to 8:15pm, San Francisco Highway by Pinatang Park
2. Second setup: 9pm to 10:15pm, San Francisco Highway by Guata beach
3. Third setup: 11pm to 12:15am, San Francisco Highway by Sinapalo 3

■ Friday, Dec. 30, 2016:

1. First setup: 7pm to 8:15pm, San Francisco Highway, Igua area
2. Second setup: 9pm to 10:15pm, San Francisco Highway by Teteto beach
3. Third setup: 11pm to 12:15am, San Francisco Highway, Lotgan area

■ Saturday, Dec. 31, 2016:

1. First setup: 7pm to 8:15pm, San Francisco Highway by Sinapalo 3
2. Second setup: 9pm to 10:15pm San Francisco highway by Guata beach
3. Third setup: 11pm to 12:15am, San Francisco Highway by Pinatang Park.

Each checkpoint will last at least 75 minutes (1 hour and 15 minutes). ***(DPS)***

COMMUNITY BRIEFS

IP host gov.mp temporarily down

This is to inform the general public that the IP host gov.mp will temporarily be down until further notice. As a result, certain department websites will be down for maintenance. We apologize for any inconvenience this matter may cause. ***(PR)***

Join the annual Christmas Bird Count

On Dec. 19, birders are invited to participate in Saipan's Annual Christmas Bird Count. Volunteers will meet at 6am at the American Memorial Park. Bring binoculars if you have them, but it's okay if you don't. For more information, contact Steve Mullin at 664-6011 or smullin.cnmi.dfw@gmail.com /. ***(PR)***

Wage and salary statement workshop

The Division of Revenue and Taxation, Department of Finance will be conducting a workshop for the Annual Wage and Salary Statement, Form (W-2CM) for tax year 2016 and other 2016 yearend filing requirements. The workshop will be on Friday, Dec. 16, 2016. The first seminar will be from 8am to 11am and the second will be from 1pm to 4pm at the Pedro P. Tenorio Multi-Purpose Center. Confirm your attendance by calling the Division of Revenue and Taxation at 664-1000 and 664-1098 or fax at 664-1015. ***(PR)***

NMC to highlight Prior Learning credit at info session

The Northern Marianas College will be highlighting its Credit for Prior Learning Program during the information session on Jan. 5, 2017. Anyone interested in learning more about this program is invited to attend.

Credit for Prior Learning is a way that college credit is awarded for knowledge gained through training, employment, and life-experiences, as self-assessed and documented in a portfolio.

The portfolio will be developed in the Prior Learning Assessment Portfolio Development course, a three-credit course being offered this spring semester at NMC. The course, in effect since fall 2014 at NMC, will help students develop a portfolio that includes a written analysis of what they learned and how they applied this knowledge in the workplace at a level that merits college credit consideration.

The Portfolio Development course is a requirement in the Credit for Prior Learning process and will examine written narratives, verifiable documents, certificates of training, certifications and licenses, proficiency exams, college transcripts, and military and professional training. Other verifiable evidence of knowledge may be considered.

The info session will also feature topics such as the college's new bachelor's degree in Business Management, benefits of a higher education, financial aid opportunities, and other initiatives.

The information session, which is open to all prospective students and community members, will be held on Thursday, Jan. 5, 2017, from 5pm to 6pm in Room D-1 at the college's As Terlaje campus. Those who attend the info session will qualify to have their application and placement test fees waived—a savings of up to $75!

For more information about the information session and/or applying to NMC, contact the Office of Admissions & Records at (670) 237-6770, email oar@marianas.edu or visit www.marianas.edu. ***(NMC)***

Decolonization discussions slated for western Guam

HAGATNA, Guam (AP)—A community in western Guam will host a series of village discussions about the island's political relationship with the United States.

Adelup announced Wednesday that the government's Commission on Decolonization will hold meetings beginning next week to educate villagers about Guam's political options: independence, statehood or free association, reported *The Pacific Daily News*. The first meeting is scheduled for December 14.

"The commission is inviting all Guamanians to this meeting because it is important that we all understand what the self-determination movement means," said Ed Alvarez, the commission's executive director, in a news release. "It's about time that the native inhabitants of Guam had a voice in determining their future."

The island's native Chamorro inhabitants are expected to vote on the issue in a non-binding referendum, but the vote has been delayed since 1998.

Gov. Eddie Calvo said earlier this year that he wanted to hold the vote along with the general election in November, but his plans for an aggressive education campaign never got off the ground and the commission delayed the referendum again.

Zarones says he will file ethics complaint vs OAG

By FERDIE DE LA TORRE
ferdie_delatorre@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

Chief Solicitor James M. Zarones plans to file an ethics complaint against the Office of the Attorney General for prosecuting a traffic case against him despite it having no lawful authority over him.

As this developed, assistant attorney general Jonathan Robert Glass Jr. has insisted that the OAG can continue to prosecute the case against Zarones.

» Glass insists OAG can prosecute case vs colleague

Glass said the OAG has made no motion for recusal or disqualification and no hearing has been held taht would disqualify the OAG from prosecuting the case.

Zarones, who is employed with the OAG, is accused of failing to yield the right of way to another motorist. The traffic citation was issued by a police officer on Oct. 5, 2016.

On Friday, Zarones, who represented himself, filed a motion asking for a bench trial on or before Dec. 23, 2016. He has not waived his right to a speedy public trial. His motion will be heard on Dec. 15 at 1:30pm, in the courtroom of Associate Judge Joseph N. Camacho.

Zarones said the OAG's Criminal Division does not object to the scheduling of a bench trial on or before Dec. 23, 2016.

Zarones said, however, that the OAG's Criminal Division stated that if they are removed from this case, then they would want any special prosecutor who is appointed to have sufficient time to prosecute the case.

During the arraignment last Nov. 3, Zarones told the court that he intends to leave the Commonwealth permanently on Dec. 30, 2016.

Due to a court order that a special prosecutor be appointed, the case was set for a status conference on Dec. 1, 2016.

Zarones said to date, the OAG's Criminal Division has ignored the court's order to appoint a special prosecutor.

The chief solicitor said the OAG Criminal Division's continued prosecution of him is a direct violation of the court's order, violates his right to due process and equal protection of the law, and is a violation of the Commonwealth Rules of Professional Responsibility.

He intended to file yesterday a motion requesting sanctions and dismissal of the case.

Zarones added that he will not tolerate the unethical conduct of OAG's Criminal Division and that an ethics complaint will be forthcoming.

Zarones said at the Nov. 3 arraignment, he took great care to notify the court that he would not be within the CNMI jurisdiction between Nov. 17 and 27, 2016.

Zarones said the court acknowledged that he would not be available on those dates, but nonetheless, the court subsequently set a status hearing for Nov. 23, 2016, when it was physically impossible for him to attend the proceeding.

Zarones said the court did not provide him with actual or legal notice of the hearing on Nov. 23 and as such, he has no knowledge of what occurred during the ex-parte hearing. Ex-parte hearing means one of the parties in a case is present or heard.

Zarones said the court should set a bench trial on or before Dec. 23, 2016, because any other action will violate his right to a speedy trial under both the CNMI and the Sixth Amendment of the U.S. Constitution.

Zarones said he made it clear to the court at his first court appearance that he would not be able to contest this traffic citation if the matter is prolonged.

Zarones said if he is not afforded his right to a speedy trial on or before Dec. 23, 2016, then he will be forced to enter a plea; not because he is guilty but because citizens who contest traffic tickets cannot expect the timely administration of justice in the NMI.

The government, through Glass, filed a brief filed on Friday as to the issue whether the OAG can recuse and then un-recuse itself.

Glass said neither the government nor the defendant moved to recuse the OAG in this case. Glass said no party filed a written motion for recusal in this case either.

"If there was no recusal, there can be no un-recusal," he pointed out.

The OAG recently filed an emergency motion requesting Superior Court Presiding Judge Robert C. Naraja to reconsider his earlier order that directed the OAG to appoint a special prosecutor to handle the case.

SIS' Hwang gains early acceptance to UPenn

Congratulations to Saipan International School student Cerinn Hwang on her early acceptance to the University of Pennsylvania, Class of 2021, where she will study International Relations and Actuary Science.

The University of Pennsylvania is a private, Ivy League university founded in the 1740s by Benjamin Franklin in order to train students as future leaders in business, government and public service. This idea was revolutionary at a time when other institutions of higher learning were dedicated to educating men for the ministry and this spirit of innovation is alive and well at UPenn today.

According to U.S. News and World Report, 2016: "Inspired by the intellectual audacity and educational ideals of our founder, Benjamin Franklin, the University of Pennsylvania offers a compelling mixture of world-class liberal arts coursework and pre-professional education."

SIS is proud of Hwang's accomplishments and wishes her the best of luck in her transition from an SIS Gecko to a UPenn Quaker, said Ron Snyder, Saipan International School headmaster. ***(PR)***

CONTRIBUTED PHOTO
Congratulations to Saipan International School student Cerinn Hwang.

Improving governance of maritime transport in the Pacific

PORT VILA, Vanuatu—Heads of maritime and energy administrations gathered in Port Vila, Vanuatu, last Dec. 5 to discuss and agree on regional issues, challenges and opportunities for an improved governance of the energy and transport sectors and the request for support from various development partners committed to energy and transport in the Pacific.

The three-day regional workshop was hosted by the government of Vanuatu in collaboration with the Secretariat of the Pacific Community and the International Maritime Organization.

"The government of Vanuatu is particularly proud to host the regional meeting for heads of maritime and energy in order to prepare the Third Energy and Transport Ministers Meeting in 2017 as it fits the national green development aspirations in Vanuatu and national plans to provide secure, affordable, widely accessible, high quality, clean energy and transport services leading toward the national development vision of 'an educated, healthy, and wealthy nation,'" said Jotham Naphat, minister for Public Utilities.

Sustainable maritime transport is a cross-cutting issue and a key driver toward the achievement of the sustainable development goals, with many of these goals particularly being relevant for maritime transport in the Pacific due to its uniqueness in terms of geography, population size and dispersion over a vast ocean, political organization and traditions.

As the Pacific region progresses in implementing transport initiatives at the regional and national levels driven by international obligations and regional collaboration, the triennial Regional Transport Ministers' meetings along with regular meetings of transport officials, provide a medium-term roadmap for addressing emerging transport issues.

Following the second Regional Energy and Transport Ministers' meeting in Nadi, Fiji, in April 2014, several national and regional initiatives have been undertaken to improve the governance of maritime transport in order to facilitate trade and support economic development of Pacific Island countries and territories; steer the transportation system toward a greener economy and low carbon development; and improve the consistent global implementation of international maritime conventions.

The economic contribution of Pacific women through their participation and involvement in the maritime sector also constitutes opportunities for the future of the Pacific maritime sector.

SPC deputy director-general (Suva) Dr. Audrey Aumua said that last week's discussion and work "will provide us the opportunity to look at maritime transport and energy as key drivers of sustainable development in the global context of the 2030 Sustainable Development Agenda and the regional frameworks for resilient development and Pacific Regionalism."

Aumua also highlighted the question: which of the current or future actions at the regional and national level in the maritime transport and energy sectors are the most relevant and effective to achieve the global, regional and national goals?

Participants will be encouraged to raise and agree on issues and requests to be presented at the third Energy and Transport Ministers' meeting in April 2017 for endorsement.

The workshop ended Friday, Dec. 9. ***(SPC)***

Opinion

Hafa Adai!
Saipan Tribune
THE CNMI'S FIRST DAILY NEWSPAPER
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EDITORIAL

In Gambia, a 'big man' president moves on

The recent elections in Gambia, one of Africa's smallest countries—resulting in the defeat of one of the continent's most blatant "big men" and potential presidents-for-life—should teach other presidents and peoples a sharp lesson.

Yahya Jammeh, who came to power in a military coup d'etat and was in power for 22 years, was fully expected by Gambians and everyone else to stay in power through victory in the elections or otherwise. However, he lost to Adama Barrow, a relatively unprepossessing businessman, by a clear margin. To Jammeh's credit, he accepted his surprise defeat and conceded graciously.

Gambia consists of a sliver of land, basically both banks of the Gambia River, formerly a British colony, bordered on both sides by Senegal, an ex-French colony. Its population is between 1 million and 2 million. It has few resources, apart from its port and capital, Banjul, and the river. Fans of "Roots," the book by Alex Haley that became a widely watched TV series, will recall that the central figure, Kunta Kinte, was said to be from Gambia.

In recent years, Gambia's reputation has been increasingly damaged by the behavior of Jammeh, particularly in the area of human rights. He has locked up journalists, academics and political opponents at will and has taken Gambia in sometimes bizarre directions. Some of that will now presumably change under Barrow.

Apart from the importance of the change to Gambians themselves, other "big men" around the world, in Eurasia, Latin America and Central Asia as well as in Africa should take close notice of what occurred in Gambia. Voters were allowed to vote relatively freely, a long-sitting president lost, a different kind of president won and the potential president-for-life stepped down reasonably when he lost at the ballot box.

Those among African presidents who should learn the lesson start with Robert Mugabe of Zimbabwe, 92, and in power since 1980 and the presidents of, among others, Cameroon, Eritrea, Djibouti, Uganda, Rwanda, Burundi, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, the Congo, Equatorial Guinea, Gabon, Angola, Swaziland and Sudan. The length of the list indicates how widespread the practice is, and just how extraordinary Gambia's departure from the practice is.

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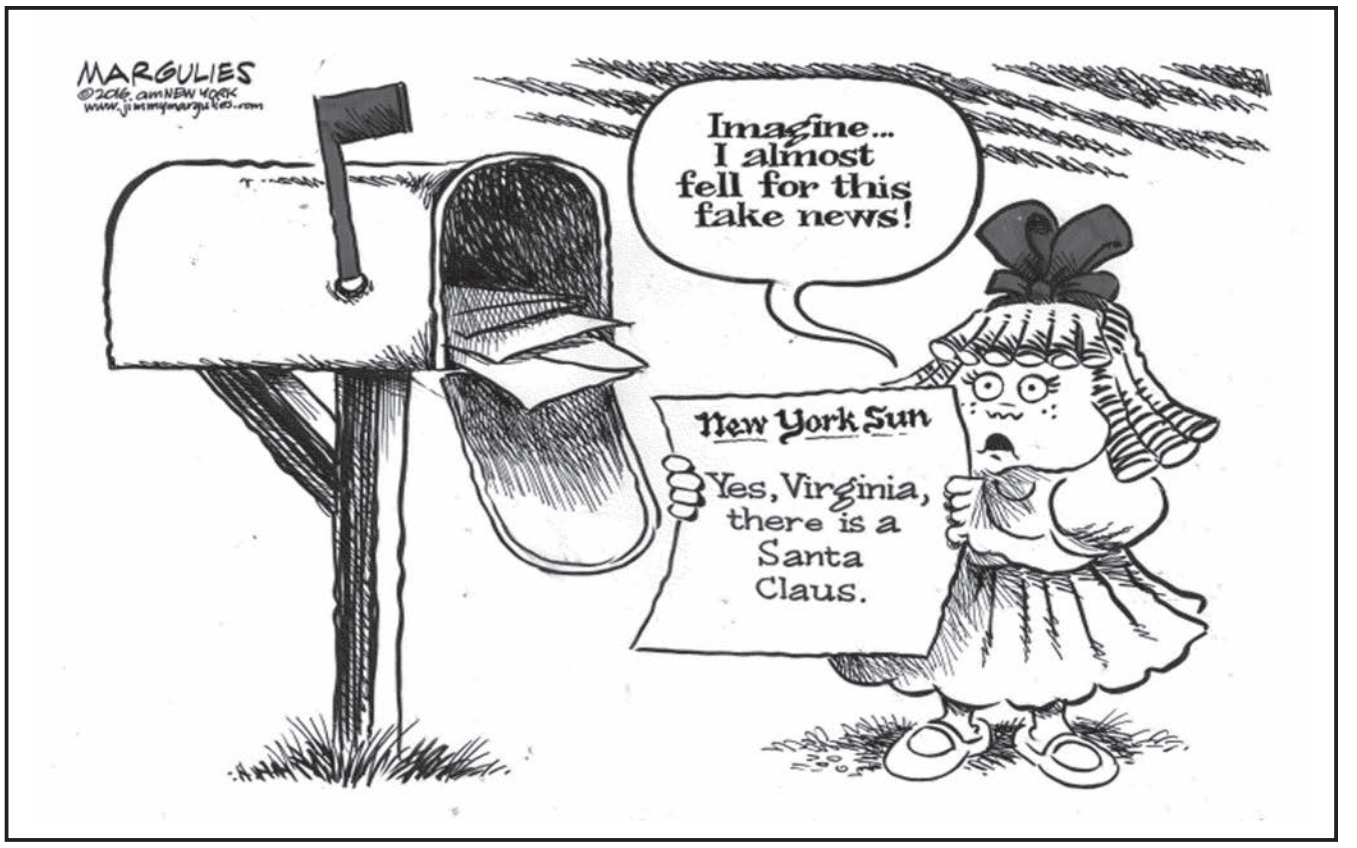
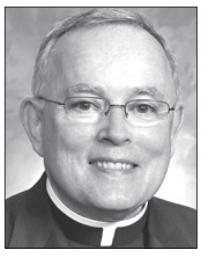


Threats against religious freedom not imaginary or overstated

By CHARLES J. CHAPUT
The Philadelphia Inquirer



Charles J. Chaput is the archbishop of Philadelphia. His book Strangers in a Strange Land: Living the Catholic Faith in a Post-Christian World *will be published in February. Readers may email him at commof@archphila.org.*

Editor's Note: The Bill of Rights marks its 225th anniversary on Dec. 15.

Religious freedom is a fundamental natural right and first among our liberties. This is borne out by the priority protection it specifically enjoys in the Constitution's First Amendment.

Consider four brief points:

First, religious faith and practice are cornerstones of the American experience. Many of America's first settlers were fleeing religious persecution. Nearly all of the American founders saw religious faith as vital to the life of a free people. They believed that liberty and happiness grow organically out of virtue. And for the founders, virtue needed grounding in religious faith.

At the heart of American public life is an essentially religious vision of man and government. This model has given us a free society marked by a wide variety of cultural and religious expressions. But our system's success does not result from clever legal mechanics. Our system works precisely because of the moral assumptions that undergird it. And those assumptions have religious roots.

When the founders talked about religion, they meant more than a vague "spirituality." The distinguished legal scholar Harold Berman showed that the founders—though they had differing views about religion among themselves—understood religion positively as "both belief in God and belief in an after-life of reward for virtue, and punishment for sin." In other words, religion mattered. It made people live differently and live better. People's faith was assumed to have broad implications, including the political kind.

That leads to my second point: Freedom of religion is more than freedom of worship. The right to worship is a necessary but not a sufficient part of religious liberty. For most believers, and certainly for Christians, faith requires community. It begins in worship, but it also demands preaching, teaching, and service. Real faith always bears fruit in public witness and action. Otherwise it's just empty words.

The founders saw the public value of religious faith because they inherited its legacy and experienced its formative influence themselves. They created a nation designed to depend on the moral convictions of religious believers, and to welcome their active role in public life.

Here's my third point: Threats against religious freedom in our country are not imaginary or overstated. They're happening right now. One example is the Obama administration's Health and Human Services mandate, commonly called the contraceptive mandate, which violates the religious identity of many religiously inspired public ministries. Government now increasingly interferes with the conscience rights of medical providers, private employers and individual citizens and attacks the policies, hiring practices and tax statuses of religious charities and ministries.

Much of this hostility links to Catholic and other religious teaching on the dignity of life and human sexuality. Catholic moral convictions about abortion, contraception and the purpose of sexuality are clearly unpopular in some quarters. Yet Catholic ideas about the nature of personhood, marriage and sexuality are rooted not just in revelation, but also in reason and natural law. Human beings have an inherent nature that is not just the product of accident or culture, but universal and rooted in permanent truths knowable to reason.

This understanding of the human person anchors the entire American experiment. If human nature is little more than modeling clay, and no permanent human nature exists by the hand of "nature's God," then natural, unalienable rights obviously can't exist. And no human "rights" can finally claim priority over the interests of the state.

The problem is that critics of religious faith tend to reduce all of these moral convictions to an expression of subjective beliefs. And if they're purely subjective beliefs, then—so the critics will argue—they can't be rationally defended. And because they're rationally indefensible, they should be treated as a form of prejudice. In effect, 2,000 years of moral experience, moral reasoning, and religious conviction suddenly become a species of bias.

There's more, though. When religious belief is redefined downward to a kind of private bias, then the religious identity of institutional ministries has no public value, other than the utility of getting credulous people to do good things. And exempting Catholic social ministries, for example, from actions that directly contradict their religious identity, becomes a concession to private "prejudice." And concessions to private prejudice feed bigotry and hurt the public—or so the reasoning goes.

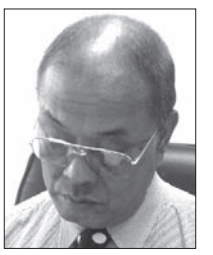
This is how deeply held, deeply rooted moral teaching and religious belief end up being branded as hate speech.

So here's a fourth and final point: From the beginning, religious believers—alone and in communities—have enriched American history simply by trying to live their faith in the world. We need to realize that America's founding documents assume an implicitly religious anthropology. The trouble is that this ennobling idea of human nature, nature's God and natural rights is one that many of our leaders no longer share.

We ignore that fact at our own very serious peril.

EDITORIAL POLICY Letters to the editor must include the NAME, VILLAGE ADDRESS, and CONTACT NUMBER of the contributor. Letters that do not have these information will immediately be trashed. Contributions consisting of 500 words or less have more chances of getting published. The *Saipan Tribune* reserves the right to publish a contribution or not; the right to edit submissions for length, accuracy, and clarity; and the right to publish and distribute contributions in print, electronic, or other media formats. Submissions may be sent via snail mail to the 2nd Floor, JP Center, Beach Road, Garapan, Saipan, 96950; fax (670) 235-3740; e-mail to editor@saipantribune.com; or through our website at www.saipantribune.com.

Where's the golden egg?



By JOHN S. DELROSARIO JR.
Special to the Saipan Tribune

John DelRosario Jr. is a former publisher of the Saipan Tribune *and a former secretary of the Department of Public Lands. All views expressed by the author are his/her own and do not necessarily reflect the opinion and stance of the* Saipan Tribune.

We heard of the arrival of the metaphorical golden eggs. Bureaucrats call it "economic improvement." There's joy in the land that the prized eggs would be shared among our people. A timely arrival for the holidays!

Browbeaten villagers heard about it, unsure what the discordant message is all about. They finally received their share of it in the form of *balut* or spoiled eggs. Woe!

There were questions raised whatever happened to the golden egg trumpeted by the secretary of Finance that was celebrated with a victory lap. Villagers were hopeful they would have some "disposable" income for the holidays. But it looks like they're skipped, once more.

Most villagers expected that the new revenue be spread far and wide, lifting all boats. But this wasn't the case either beyond a victory lap that soundly excluded them.

The secretary of Finance must have used the report "at face value" without verification. Is she familiar with the criteria used in the preparation of the material? Did the report say anything else like leaving some in the kitty for that rainy day?

Did the secretary ever review Moodys' most recent economic assessment of the CNMI? Was its assessment a rosy picture of investments here or was it loaded with serious warnings? What was our rating? Wasn't it two layers below junk bonds? Does it matter to the elected elite?

Arrogance: What turned off other investors from flocking to the CNMI? Wasn't it the quiet ouster of Nippon and South Korean investments? Wasn't this political arrogance woefully adolescent and shortsighted?

It highlights local "instability" on investment policy. Ignoring one or choosing a favorite at the expense of others is a fatal and self-destructing decision. We toyed with instability to our own demise! Why do you think there's a huge drop in Japanese visitors? It's headed to the Aloha State! Hell, even as an islander love Hawaii from its weather to the pleasantries of the Aloha Spirit!

Efficiency: Given scarce resources, is there economic efficiency or is the term a foreign lingo here among government managers legally authorized to dispose of local funds?

Was the disposition of the $400,000 for the MV *Luta* an efficient expenditure of taxpayers' contribution? Was there an appropriation for it as required by the Constitution?

Wasn't the ship arrested and lawsuits filed against it in federal court? Did the people of Rota benefit from the deal or was it only the evil genius behind the illegally expropriated public funds and his family? Explain to taxpayers the economic efficiency of your disposition of the $400,000! Ignorance of the law is no excuse, you know!

Is the improvement sufficient to handle lack of funds at CHC, NMI debts with CUC, PSS and the likely termination of Medicaid (Obamacare) sometime in the near-term and other obligations? The hospital needs a myriad of things from in-house medication to PJs for patients. CUC is broke and the NMI must settle its debts forthwith before services sputter to death. Now, this merits a victory lap too at least by way of honest acknowledgment!

Most folks in government aren't talking in forthright fashion but have whispered, "Shsssh! Don't loud!' alluding to the "iffy" nature of the so-called "improvement." Healthcare is under serious rationing while over 500 families need help putting a roof over their heads. Sad!

Apparently the distribution of the golden eggs is limited to the elite while most others in the villages had to settle for spoiled eggs or *balut*! Well, at least the golden eggs are confined to be figments of our imagination for Christmas!

Lawsuit: The taxpayers' case against Biktot Hokog and the MV *Luta* on the expropriation of $400,000 awaits judicial decision. At issue is the violation of laws, specifically, the constitutional mandate on legislative appropriation of all public funds and the Open Government Act (OGA).

On either side, Hokog must answer violation of laws. Ignorance of the law is not an excuse! Now, recouping or paying back the $400,000 is a given and how sad it would be if the secretary of Finance turns into the single chopping block in the process.

Hokog violated the OGA for pushing taxpayers' money that benefited his family. Next, he completely ignored constitutional mandate on the appropriation of public funds. It's jungle rules over a government of laws.

Larissa Larson as secretary of Finance has unilateral authority to deny disbursement of the $400,000 to Hokog and family. If she has any inkling of the concept of separation of powers then it should have been clear from the outset that the Executive Branch doesn't appropriate funds via verbal instructions. Appropriation of funds is a legislative authority!

Reunification: Several mayors between the NMI and Guahan are seeking for a non-binding vote on reunification of the two jurisdictions. Historically, the vote in the late '60s was oceans apart on issues:

NMI wants economic uplift while Guam slammed such aspiration with bitter memory of our role killing Chamorus during World War II. End of discussion!

Cultural or racial similarities weren't reasons for reunification exercise then. Why should this be the case today? It was one bitter confrontation or experience.

Now, is the prevailing condescending attitude against northerners (Gi Saipan) a cultural forte from our southern neighbor? Would this aid in the discussion or would it not prepare it for more explosive and useless exchange? Understood the bitterness from the war experience. But the attitude that you're a higher CHamoru is stretching it, *haf` mohon? Hombre iya gachuñg, "mamarehu" hit ha` tautau!*

The Gettysburg Address 2.0: Donald Trump's first 100 days in office

By TIBERIU DIANU
SPECIAL TO THE SAIPAN TRIBUNE

Continued from yesterday.

2.4. National security and constitutional rule of law

The "restoration of national security and constitutional rule of law" package contains the following five actions:

(1) cancel every unconstitutional executive action, memorandum and order issued by President Obama;

(2) begin the process of selecting a replacement for Justice Scalia from one of the 20 judges on Trump's list, who will uphold and defend the Constitution of the United States;

(3) cancel all federal funding to sanctuary cities;

(4) begin removing the more than 2 million illegal immigrants from the country and cancel visas to foreign countries that won't take them back;

(5) suspend immigration from terror-prone regions where vetting cannot safely occur; all vetting of people coming into our country will be considered extreme vetting.

2.5. New legislative acts

Finally, the "introduction to, and passage by, Congress of some broader legislation" package contains the following 10 measures:

(1) Middle Class Tax Relief and Simplification Act: An economic plan designed to grow the economy 4 percent per year and create at least 25 million new jobs through massive tax reduction and simplification, in combination with trade reform, regulatory relief, and lifting the restrictions on American energy. The largest tax reductions are for the middle class. A middle-class family with two children will get a 35 percent tax cut. The current number of brackets will be reduced from seven to three, and tax forms will likewise be greatly simplified. The business rate will be lowered from 35 to 15 percent, and the trillions of dollars of American corporate money overseas can now be brought back at a 10-percent rate.

(2) End the Offshoring Act: Establishes tariffs to discourage companies from laying off their workers in order to relocate to other countries and ship their products back to the U.S. tax-free.

(3) American Energy & Infrastructure Act: Leverages public-private partnerships, and private investments through tax incentives, to spur $1 trillion in infrastructure investment over 10 years. It is revenue neutral.

(4) School Choice and Education Opportunity Act: Redirects education dollars to give parents the right to send their kid to public, private, charter, magnet, religious or home school of their choice. Ends Common Core, brings education supervision to local communities. It expands vocational and technical education, and makes two and four-year colleges more affordable.

(5) Repeal and Replace Obamacare: Fully repeals Obamacare and replaces it with Health Savings Accounts, the ability to purchase health insurance across state lines, and lets states manage Medicaid funds. Reforms will also include cutting the red tape at the FDA: there are over 4,000 drugs awaiting approval, and we especially want to speed the approval of life-saving medications.

(6) Affordable Childcare and Eldercare Act: Allows Americans to deduct childcare and elder care from their taxes, incentivizes employers to provide on-side childcare services, and creates tax-free Dependent Care Savings Accounts for both young and elderly dependents, with matching contributions for low-income families.

(7) End Illegal Immigration Act: Fully funds the construction of a wall on our southern border with the full understanding that Mexico will be reimbursing the United States for the full cost of such a wall, establishes a two-year mandatory minimum federal prison sentence for illegally re-entering the U.S. after a previous deportation, and a five-year mandatory minimum for illegally re-entering for those with felony convictions, multiple misdemeanor convictions or two or more prior deportations; also reforms visa rules to enhance penalties for overstaying and to ensure open jobs are offered to American workers first.

(8) Restoring Community Safety Act: Reduces surging crime, drugs and violence by creating a task force on violent crime and increasing funding for programs that train and assist local police; increases resources for federal law enforcement agencies and federal prosecutors to dismantle criminal gangs and put violent offenders behind bars.

(9) Restoring National Security Act: Rebuilds our military by eliminating the defense sequester and expanding military investment; provides veterans with the ability to receive public VA treatment or attend the private doctor of their choice; protects our vital infrastructure from cyber-attack; establishes new screening procedures for immigration to ensure those who are admitted to our country support our people and our values.

(10) Clean Up Corruption in Washington Act: Enacts new ethics reforms to drain the swamp and reduce the corrupting influence of special interests on our politics.

3. The Grace Period

Trump mentioned that his Contract with the American Voter would "restore prosperity to our economy, security to our communities, and honesty to our government." He continued by saying that "if we follow these steps, we will once more have a government of, by and for the people."

This comprehensive 28-point action plan will be, obviously, the most discussed document until Trump's inauguration as the 45th President of the United States, on Jan. 20, 2017, and also during the 100-day interval, between Jan. 20 and May 1, 2017, when the plan period expires. After that, Trump will have to deliver, and explain his achievements before the nation.

History has shown us that, during the interval between April 1953 and April 2009, presidential job approval ratings following the first 100 days in office varied overall from 55 percent (Bill Clinton, on April 22 - 24, 1993) to 83 percent (John Kennedy, on April 28 – May 3, 1961). As for the Republican presidents, the lowest approval rate belonged to George Bush, the father (56 percent), and the highest—to Dwight Eisenhower (73 percent), with Ronald Reagan in the middle (with 68 percent).

Will Donald Trump surprise everybody—again—with an unusual approval rate on May 1, 2017? This won't be his first.

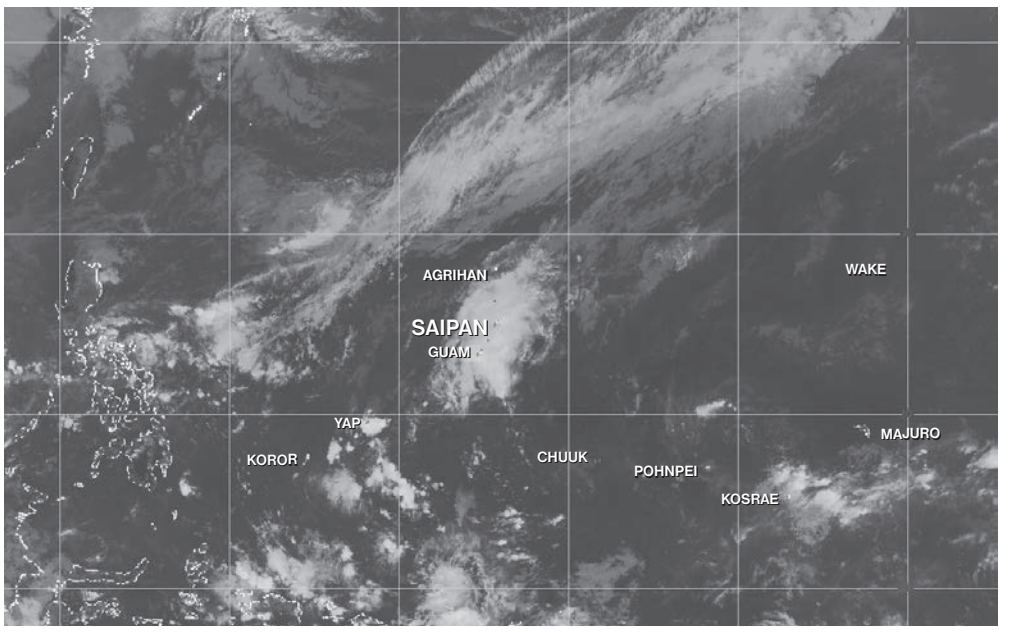
Tiberiu Dianu has published several books and over 100 articles in law, politics, and post-communist societies. He currently lives and works in Washington, D.C.

The Weather

5-DAY FORECAST FOR SAIPAN AND TINIAN

TODAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
Partly cloudy with isolated showers. East winds 10 to 20 mph.	Partly cloudy with isolated showers. Southeast winds 15 to 20 mph.	Mostly cloudy with isolated showers.	Mostly cloudy with isolated showers.	Partly cloudy with isolated showers.
▲89° ▼79°	▲89° ▼79°	▲89° ▼78°	▲88° ▼78°	▲88° ▼78°

YESTERDAY'S SATELLITE IMAGE



PICTURE TIME: 6:00 AM, MONDAY, DECEMBER 12, 2016
Western North Pacific between equator and 25N from 130E to 180.

A weak trade-wind trough moving over the Marianas brought scattered showers to the area overnight. Over the past couple of hours, isolated thunderstorms were also seen with the heavier showers. Even though most of the activity is seen over Rota and Guam, NWS decided it was close enough to keep scattered showers and isolated thunderstorms over Tinian and Saipan. Latest satellite data combined with model data also ended scattered showers earlier than previously anticipated. Expect isolated showers over the region by this evening; however, this could occur early this afternoon. Otherwise no changes are made to the forecast beyond tonight.

Satellite image and accompanying information are provided by the National Weather Service. For an updated weather forecast, visit the National Weather Service Guam homepage: www.prh.noaa.gov/guam/

MICRONESIA		▼ ▲
Guam and Rota	Partly cloudy	82 / 89 °F
Palau	Mostly cloudy	80 / 86 °F
Yap	Partly sunny	80 / 86 °F
Chuuk	Thunderstorms	80 / 85 °F
Pohnpei	Morning clouds	81 / 86 °F
Kosrae	Mostly cloudy	81 / 86 °F
Majuro	Strong thunderstorms	80 / 84 °F

AROUND THE GLOBE		▼ ▲
Auckland	Partly cloudy	58 / 67 °F
Beijing	Partly cloudy	21 / 38 °F
Hong Kong	Morning clouds	68 / 78 °F
Honolulu	Mostly sunny	64 / 74 °F
London	Afternoon clouds	51 / 57 °F
Los Angeles	High level clouds	58 / 65 °F
Manila	Partly cloudy	77 / 87 °F
Melbourne	Afternoon clouds	63 / 89 °F
Miami	Partly sunny	75 / 82 °F
New York	Partly sunny	34 / 42 °F
Osaka	Mostly cloudy	42 / 51 °F
Paris	Partly sunny	41 / 50 °F
Pusan	Afternoon clouds	43 / 51 °F
Rome	Sunny	40 / 56 °F
Salem	High level clouds	31 / 40 °F
San Francisco	Heavy rain	51 / 56 °F
Seoul	High level clouds	22 / 44 °F
Tokyo	Mostly cloudy	39 / 58 °F
Washington, DC	High level clouds	34 / 44 °F

NMI CRIME STOPPERS
Anonymous tips can now be submitted through the following:
- Call 234-7272 (PARA) on any telephone
- *11 on any IT&E cellular phone
- Log on to the internet at www.nmicrimestoppers.net

TIDES: SAIPAN HARBOR TODAY		
12:45 AM	LOW TIDE	-0.48 Feet
7:30 AM	HIGH TIDE	1.97 Feet
12:56 PM	LOW TIDE	1.0 Feet
6:15 PM	HIGH TIDE	2.17 Feet

	SUNRISE	SUNSET
Tuesday	6:34 AM	5:48 PM
Wednesday	6:35 AM	5:49 PM
Thursday	6:35 AM	5:49 PM
Friday	6:36 AM	5:50 PM
Saturday	6:36 AM	5:50 PM

	MOONRISE	MOONSET	MOONRISE
Tuesday	-	5:19 AM	5:13 PM
Wednesday	-	6:23 AM	6:13 PM
Thursday	-	7:26 AM	7:14 PM
Friday	-	8:26 AM	8:15 PM
Saturday	-	9:21 AM	9:14 PM

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FLIGHT SCHEDULE AS OF DECEMBER 5, 2016

DEPARTURES

SAIPAN-GUAM (GUM)

UA6394	4:15am	5:05am	Daily
UA6392	8:40am	9:30am	Daily
UA6391	1:30pm	3:10pm	1, 4, 5, 7 via Rota
UA6390	2:20pm	3:10pm	2, 3, 6
UA6398	6:05pm	6:55pm	Daily
UA6396	9:50pm	10:40pm	Daily

SAIPAN-ROTA (ROP)

UA6391	1:30pm	2:05pm	1, 4, 5, 7

ROTA (ROP)-GUAM (GUM)

UA6391	2:35pm	3:10pm	1, 4, 5, 7

SAIPAN-NARITA (NRT)

DL297	4:20pm	7:00pm	Daily

SAIPAN-SEOUL (ICN)

OZ626	2:20am	6:00am	1
OZ626	2:50am	6:30am	2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7
7C3403	4:45am	8:30am	Daily
LJ652	2:10pm	6:05pm	Daily
7C3401	4:00pm	7:45pm	Daily

SAIPAN-BUSAN (PUS)

OZ608	3:10am	6:20am	4, 7

SAIPAN-SHANGHAI (PVG)

3U8648	6:10am	8:40am	1, 4, 5, 7

SAIPAN-BEIJING (PEK)

MU764	1:30am	6:35am	3, 5, 7

SAIPAN-GUANGZHOU (CAN)

3U8646	4:20am	7:30am	2, 6

SAIPAN-MANILA (MNL)

OZ626/701	2:20am	11:05am	1 via ICN
OZ626/701	2:50am	11:05am	2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7 via ICN
UA6394/191	4:15am	8:55am	2, 3, 6, 7 via GUM
UA6394/PR111	4:15am	9:15am	1, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7 via GUM
PR1572	5:45am	7:45am	7, 4
UA6391/183	1:30pm	8:50pm	5 via Rota-GUM
UA6391/183	1:30pm	9:10pm	1, 4, 7 via Rota-GUM
UA6391/193	1:30pm	10:35pm	5 via Rota-GUM-ROR
UA6390/183	2:20pm	8:50pm	2 via GUM
UA6390/183	2:20pm	9:10pm	3, 6 via GUM
UA6390/193	2:20pm	10:35pm	2 via GUM-ROR

SAIPAN-HONG KONG (HKG)

HX077	2:00am	5:00am	1, 4
OZ626/721	2:20am	11:50am	1 via ICN
OZ626/721	2:50am	11:50am	2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7 via ICN
UA6391/159	1:30pm	9:55pm	1, 5 via Rota-GUM
UA6390/159	2:20pm	9:55pm	3, 6 via GUM

ARRIVALS

GUAM (GUM)-SAIPAN

UA6393	2:45am	3:35am	Daily
UA6395	7:15am	8:05am	Daily
UA6391	12:10pm	1:00pm	1, 4, 5, 7
UA6390	12:10pm	1:50pm	2, 3, 6 via Rota
UA6397	4:45pm	5:35pm	Daily
UA6399	8:30pm	9:20pm	Daily

GUAM (GUM)-ROTA (ROP)

UA6390	12:10pm	12:45pm	2, 3, 6

ROTA (ROP)-SAIPAN

UA6390	1:15pm	1:50pm	2, 3, 6

NARITA (NRT)-SAIPAN

DL298	10:30am	3:05pm	Daily

SEOUL (ICN)-SAIPAN

LJ651	7:30am	1:10pm	Daily
7C3402	9:30am	3:00pm	Daily
OZ625	7:40pm	1:10am+1	7
OZ625	8:15pm	1:45am+1	1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6
7C3404	10:10pm	3:40am+1	Daily

BUSAN (PUS)-SAIPAN

OZ607	9:05pm	1:55am+1	3, 6

SHANGHAI (PVG)-SAIPAN

3U8647	10:40pm	5:00am+1	3, 4, 6, 7

BEIJING (PEK)-SAIPAN

MU763	4:40pm	12:30am+1	2, 4, 6

GUANGZHOU (CAN)-SAIPAN

3U8645	7:40pm	3:00am+1	1, 5

MANILA (MNL)-SAIPAN

UA190/6397	9:55am	5:35pm	2, 3, 6, 7 via GUM
OZ702/625	12:15pm	1:10am+1	7 via ICN
OZ702/625	12:15pm	1:45am+1	1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6 via ICN
PR1571	10:25pm	4:45am+1	3, 6
UA192/6395	9:45pm	8:05am+1	2, 5 via ROR-GUM
PR110/UA6395	10:05pm	8:05am+1	2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7 via GUM
UA184/6395	10:25pm	8:05am+1	1, 3, 4, 6, 7 via GUM
UA184/6395	11:30pm	8:05am+1	2, 5 via GUM

HONG KONG (HKG)-SAIPAN

OZ722/625	1:10pm	1:10am+1	7 via ICN
OZ722/625	1:10pm	1:45am+1	1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6 via ICN
HX076	5:30pm	12:30am+1	3, 7
UA116/6395	9:55pm	8:05am+1	1, 3, 5, 6 via GUM

LEGEND: Days: Monday (1), Tuesday (2), Wednesday (3), Thursday (4), Friday (5), Saturday (6) and Sunday (7); 3U: Sichuan Airlines; MU: China Eastern; UA: United Airlines; DL: Delta Airlines; OZ: Asiana; 7C: Jeju Air; HX: Hong Kong Airlines; LJ: Jin Air; ETD: Estimated Time of Departure;ETA: Estimated Time of Arrival. The Saipan Tribune is not responsible for any changes in the schedule.)

STAR MARIANAS AIR, INC.

TINIAN TO SAIPAN

DEPARTURE	ARRIVAL	FREQUENCY
6:30AM	6:45AM	Mon, Tue, Wed, Thu, Fri, Sat
7:30AM	7:45AM	Daily
8:30AM	8:45AM	Daily
9:30AM	9:45AM	Daily
10:30AM	10:45AM	Daily
11:30AM	11:45AM	Daily
12:30NN	12:45NN	Daily
1:30PM	1:45PM	Daily
2:30PM	2:45PM	Daily
3:30PM	3:45PM	Daily
4:30PM	4:45PM	Daily
5:30PM	5:45PM	Daily
6:30PM	6:45PM	Daily
6:30PM	6:45PM	Daily

SAIPAN TO TINIAN

DEPARTURE	ARRIVAL	FREQUENCY
7:00AM	7:15AM	Daily
8:00AM	8:15AM	Daily
9:00AM	9:15AM	Daily
10:00AM	10:15AM	Daily
11:00AM	11:15AM	Daily
12:00NN	12:15NN	Daily
1:00PM	1:15PM	Daily
2:00PM	2:15PM	Daily
3:00PM	3:15PM	Daily
4:00PM	4:15PM	Daily
5:00PM	5:15PM	Daily
6:00PM	6:15PM	Daily

SAIPAN TO ROTA

DEPARTURE	ARRIVAL	FREQUENCY
7:45AM	8:15AM	Mon, Tues,Wed, Thu, Fri, Sat
4:00PM	4:30PM	Mon, Tues,Wed, Thu, Fri, Sat

ROTA TO SAIPAN

DEPARTURE	ARRIVAL	FREQUENCY
8:30AM	9:00AM	Mon, Tues,Wed, Thu, Fri, Sat
4:45PM	5:15PM	Mon, Tues,Wed, Thu, Fri, Sat

Business

Trump: Executives will run business empire with his children

NEW YORK (AP)—President-elect Donald Trump said in an interview Sunday that his executives would run his business empire alongside his children, pushing back against charges that his vast real estate holdings would pose a conflict of interest for him in the White House.

Trump has said he will leave day-to-day control of his business but has not yet offered details of how he intends to separate himself. He is planning to hold a news conference on Thursday to discuss the future of his company.

AP

Donald Trump Jr. arrives at Trump Tower in New York, Tuesday, Dec. 6, 2016.

In an interview with "Fox News Sunday," Trump said he would not be "doing deals at all."

"My executives will run it with my children. It's a big company, it's a great company. But I'm going to have nothing to do with management," Trump said. He also noted that when he ran for president, "everybody knew that I was a very big owner of real estate all over the world."

But in a sign of how Trump continues to play a role with his company while he fills out his Cabinet, the incoming president said he had turned down "seven deals with one big player, great player, last week because I thought it could be perceived as a conflict of interest."

Since his victory last month, government ethics lawyers have pressured Trump to sell his assets and put the money in a blind trust overseen by an independent manager not related to him. They contend that approach is the only way to avoid conflicts between his sprawling business holdings of roughly 500 companies in more than a dozen countries and his work as president.

Trump owns golf clubs, office towers and properties in several countries and has struck licensing deals for use of his name on hotels and other buildings around the world. One of Trump's lenders, Deutsche Bank, is in settlement talks with the Justice Department over its role in the mortgage blowup that sparked the 2008 financial crisis.

Presidents are not required to set up blind trusts. While federal ethics rules place strict limits on nearly all government employees and elected officials, the rules do not apply to the president.

Trump, in the interview, gave no indication that he was considering taking steps to sell assets or create a blind trust. The Trump Organization has said previously that the future president intends to transfer control of the company to his three adult children.

Asked about his children's roles, Trump said, "It's totally different. They're not president." He added that his children are "not making deals either, for my company."

During the campaign, Trump repeatedly assailed former Secretary of State Hillary Clinton's ties to foreign governments and corporations that had donated money to her family's charity, the Clinton Foundation, and asserted that it had created a massive conflict of interest.

Pressed on his company profiting from foreign countries booking events at Trump's new Washington hotel, Trump argued that the circumstances—and his deal-making—were different. "You know, under the law, I have the right to do it. I just don't want to do it. I don't want to do deals, because I want to focus on this."

What to do about temperamental manager?

YOUR OFFICE COACH

By MARIE G. MCINTYRE
Tribune News Service

Marie G. McIntyre is a workplace coach and the author of "Secrets to Winning at Office Politics." Send in questions and get free coaching tips at http://www.yourofficecoach.com, or follow her on Twitter @officecoach.

Q: I recently started my first job and I'm not sure what to do about my manager. "Ashley" has a mean temper and is often out of control. Just the other day, she got angry with a customer who was asking a lot of questions. When the woman got upset and refused to complete her purchase, Ashley threatened to call security.

Ashley often yells at employees and reprimands them in front of co-workers. She publicly accused one person of stealing when the problem had actually been caused a computer error. When she heard another employee describing how she belittled him, she got mad and sent him home. Then she yelled at the rest of us for not defending her.

Even though three of us are assistant managers, we still walk on eggshells because we never know when Ashley will explode. Her temper has offended customers and caused employees to quit. Since I have never had a job before, I don't know how to handle this situation. Is this the type of problem that people take to human resources?

A: This is a dreadful way to begin your career, so let me start by assuring you that most managers are not raving maniacs. Some of your bosses will be great and some only mediocre, but you are unlikely to encounter another Ashley. Putting her in a supervisory role was obviously a huge mistake.

Assuming that you work for an otherwise normal company, taking this issue to HR would definitely be appropriate. By alienating customers and driving away employees, Ashley has created serious problems for the business. If this store is a stand-alone operation, management may have no idea how much harm she is doing.

To increase credibility, all three assistant managers should participate in the HR meeting. Provide specific examples of the trouble caused by Ashley's tantrums, just as you have done here. Management will need time to investigate, so don't expect immediate action. But if nothing is done to stop Ashley's reign of terror, then it's time to start looking for your second job.

Q: I manage a retail operation that has lost a great deal of business due to increased competition. When sales began dropping, the owner laid off a lot of employees, so I now spend most of my time on the sales floor instead of doing management tasks.

To make matters worse, the owner brought in two of his relatives who are obvious drug users. We have always had a strict drug-free workplace policy, so this was very upsetting. I had planned to make this my last job before retirement, but I'm beginning to think I should look elsewhere. Would that be a good idea?

A: I actually believe you have answered your own question. Competition is eroding your business, staff reductions have turned you into a salesperson, and the owner has begun employing known drug users. Since that hardly sounds like a recipe for job security, exploring other options would seem to be a wise move. If this ailing company goes under, you will be forced into a job search anyway, so you might as well get a head start.

Brexit uncertainties threaten brain drain for UK science

LONDON (AP)—Like many foreign scientists in Britain, Joanna Bagniewska was devastated when Britons voted to leave the European Union. The biology lecturer, a Polish migrant who found Britain a welcoming place to build her academic career over a decade, is suddenly seeing her job security and research prospects up in the air.

"I'm worried that after my current contract finishes, one of the prerequisites could be a permanent residence card," she said. "I'd like to apply for EU grant money, but how much longer will it be available for?"

Britain's top universities have long been among the world's most sought-after destinations for study and research, drawing the brightest minds from all corners of the globe. But since Britons voted in June to leave the 28-nation EU, many in the science community say the U.K. risks losing the money, the international influence—and crucially, the talent—to sustain that enviable position.

More than one-tenth of research funding at British universities has come from the EU in recent years. Some fields—such as nanotechnology and cancer research—are more dependent on EU funding than others, according to a report by technology firm Digital Science. From 2007 to 2013, Britain received 8.8 billion euros ($9.4 billion) in direct EU investment in research.

Bagniewska is not just anxious about herself—she's upset for her students' future too, for the opportunities that both Britons and foreigners will likely miss out on when unfettered mobility between Britain and Europe can no longer be taken for granted.

"They were just getting excited about doing their masters and Ph.Ds in other countries. And then Brexit happened and they just got trampled," she said.

Scientists and researchers argue that being part of the EU has given British science a huge boost because it allows Britain to recruit the best talent across Europe and take part in important research collaborations and student exchanges without being constrained by national boundaries. The bloc's freedom of movement means its 500 million people can live and work visa-free in any member state.

No one knows yet what form Britain's exit from the EU—commonly known as Brexit—is going to take, but immigration was a key issue for "Leave" voters. Many believe some limit should be put on the number of EU citizens moving to Britain.

Prime Minister Theresa May has vowed to reassert control over British borders. She has offered no firm guarantees for the rights of Europeans already living in Britain, an uncertainty that weighs heavily over the 32,000 Europeans who make up 16 percent of the academic workforce in British universities. Many universities say the rhetoric over immigration control is also jeopardizing recruitment of researchers and students from further afield.

Scientists for EU, an advocacy group, says it has received over 400 letters from researchers describing how Brexit has already impacted their life and work. Some are losing doctoral students who pulled out of studentships and job offers. Academics are putting plans to relocate to Britain on hold. One said their employer, a London university, immediately imposed a temporary hiring freeze, citing uncertainties about student recruitment and research income.

Adam Durrant, a British entrepreneur who founded an aerospace startup supplying climate data to airlines and aircraft manufacturers, says he's now considering moving some of his business to a EU country outside of Britain. Part of the reason, he says, is that Brexit will likely make hiring the right people much harder than before.

"In the future, it probably means that people would be less interested to come to the U.K. to work," said Durrant. "There's a huge question mark over my company and my own personal future. I will certainly retain a U.K. presence, but my company's focus of gravity may shift elsewhere."

Nation

Trump rejects intel, lawmakers vow probe of Russia hacking

WASHINGTON (AP)—Donald Trump on Sunday called a recent CIA assessment of Russian hacking "ridiculous" and says he's not interested in getting daily intelligence briefings—an unprecedented public dismissal by a president-elect of the nation's massive and sophisticated intelligence apparatus.

Trump's remarks come as key congressional Republicans joined Democrats in demanding a bipartisan investigation into the Kremlin's activities and questioned consideration of Exxon Mobil CEO Rex Tillerson—who has close business ties with Moscow—as head of the State Department.

Asked whether he's rejecting valuable intelligence on "Fox News Sunday," Trump was defiant.

"I get it when I need it," he said of the top-secret briefings sessions, adding that he's leaving it up to the briefers to decide when a development represents a "change" big enough to notify him.

"I'm, like, a smart person. I don't have to be told the same thing in the same words every single day for the next eight years," Trump said.

The CIA has concluded with "high confidence" that Russia sought to influence the U.S. election on behalf of Trump. The finding alarmed lawmakers, including Senate Armed Services Committee Chairman John McCain who said Sunday he planned to put Sen. Lindsay Graham, a staunch Trump critic, in charge of investigating the claim.

McCain also has questions about Tillerson's business relationship with Russian President Vladimir Putin, although it's not clear Tillerson will be nominated. Sunday afternoon, Tillerson had still not been formally offered the job, according to a person with knowledge of the process who spoke on condition of anonymity.

President-elect Donald Trump speaks with members of the military during an Army-Navy NCAA college football game, Saturday, Dec. 10, 2016, in Baltimore. AP

Exxon steadily expanded its Russian business on Tillerson's watch even as its rivals faced expropriation and regulatory obstacles. In 2013, Putin bestowed the Order of Friendship on Tillerson.

"Maybe those ties are strictly commercial and got to do with his business in the oil business. Fine," McCain told CBS "Face the Nation." And "we'll give him a fair hearing. But is it a matter of concern? Certainly it should be a matter of concern."

McCain wasn't alone in raising questions about whether there would be enough blowback to sink a Tillerson nomination.

"Being a 'friend of Vladimir' is not an attribute I am hoping for from a #SecretaryOfState," tweeted Florida Republican Sen. Marco Rubio, Trump's former campaign rival and a member of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee.

Pennsylvania Democratic Sen. Bob Casey said the developments "raise serious questions about whether the incoming administration will adequately stand up to Russia's aggression."

Trump said Tillerson's relationship with Moscow was a selling point.

"A great advantage is he knows many of the players, and he knows them well. He does massive deals in Russia. He does massive deals for the company," Trump told "Fox News" in an interview broadcast Sunday. He called Senate Foreign Relations Committee Chairman Bob Corker impressive, and said former bitter rival Mitt Romney is still in the mix.

Fearing Trump crackdown, 'dreamers' advised to end travel

NEW YORK (AP)—Immigrants who were brought to the U.S. illegally as children, but were protected from deportation by President Barack Obama, are being warned by some advocates to make sure they are not traveling abroad when Donald Trump is sworn in as president on Jan. 20.

Some advocates, lawyers and universities are concerned that Trump might immediately rescind an Obama program that had allowed these young immigrants to work and travel for humanitarian, educational or employment purposes.

That could lead, they fear, to some people traveling abroad being barred from re-entering the U.S.

"We are recommending all travel be completed by or before Jan. 20 in the event laws or procedures experience a drastic change," said Angelica Salas, executive director of the Coalition for Humane Immigrant Rights of Los Angeles. "We wouldn't want to expose them to an uncertain situation should they not be allowed back to the U.S."

Trump made illegal immigration the cornerstone of his campaign, promising to build a wall along the Mexican border and deport millions of people living in the country illegally.

His actual plans, though, have yet to be revealed. Recently, he has said he wants to focus on people who have committed crimes.

During a recent Time magazine interview, Trump expressed sympathy for the 741,000 people in Obama's Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals program, which started in 2012.

"We're going to work something out that's going to make people happy and proud," Trump said. "They got brought here at a very young age, they've worked here, they've gone to school here. Some were good students. Some have wonderful jobs. And they're in never-never land because they don't know what's going to happen."

Advocates are still being cautious. Nancy Lopez-Ramirez, a 20-year-old student born in Mexico who is planning a trip there as part of a City College of New York class, said she is glad the group is returning by Jan. 15.

"My mom is like 'I am concerned with you not coming back, I want you to be able to come back,'" she said.

"It is nerve-wracking but I think that at the end it is going to be worth it," said the political-science student, who was brought to the U.S. when she was 4.

City College, part of the City University of New York, is one of the institutions advising students in the DACA program to return before Inauguration Day. So is California State University, which told administrators to tell participants in the program "that if they are outside of the United States as of January 20, 2017, there is no assurance they will be allowed to return to the U.S."

Trump can rescind the promised protection right away through an "operational memo" because Obama implemented it through one, said William Stock, president of the American Immigration Lawyers Association.

He said the program's participants should not consider traveling overseas unless they absolutely need to.

Official: FBI told Illinois GOP of possible email hacking

CHICAGO (AP)—The FBI told the Illinois Republican Party months before the presidential election that its email accounts may have been hacked, and party officials later found some of its emails on a website reportedly tied to Russia's military intelligence agency, the state GOP's executive director said Sunday.

Nick Klitzing told the Chicago Tribune (http://trib.in/2gBBncB) the FBI raised questions with the state party in June about four inactive or rarely used accounts that may have been compromised dating back to 2015.

The FBI didn't tell the state party that the possible hacking was part of a larger federal investigation into alleged Russian activity in the U.S. political system but urged officials to change passwords and take other steps to secure the email accounts.

"We thought it was weird that the FBI was giving IT advice," Klitzing said.

Klitzing said the Illinois GOP on its own found 18 of its emails on the website DCLeaks.com, which has posted more than 200 emails involving Republican activists and state parties. According to a New York Times report, U.S. intelligence officials and private cybersecurity companies believe the site was created by a unit controlled by the GRU, Russia's military intelligence agency.

The Chicago Tribune reviewed the emails provided by the state GOP and reported they dealt with such things as training requests, invitations to party events and a discussion about whether Republican U.S. Rep. Peter Roskam of Illinois should run for speaker of the House.

The FBI didn't respond to a phone message Sunday night from The Associated Press.

Questions about Russian involvement in the U.S. political system resurfaced Friday with a Washington Post report that the CIA had concluded with "high confidence" that Russia sought to influence the U.S. election on behalf of Republican Donald Trump.

Trump called the CIA's assessment "ridiculous," and his incoming chief of staff Reince Priebus, chairman of the Republican National Committee, insisted on NBC's "Meet the Press" Sunday that the RNC was not hacked.

Police expect Trump to limit surplus military equipment

HAGERSTOWN, Md. (AP)—If president-elect Donald Trump keeps his promise, surplus military grenade launchers, bayonets, tracked armored vehicles and high-powered firearms and ammunition will once again be available to state and local U.S. police departments.

National police organizations say they'll hold Trump to that promise.

President Barack Obama issued an executive order restricting that access in 2015 amid an outcry over police use of armored vehicles and other war-fighting gear to confront protesters in Ferguson, Missouri, after the fatal shooting of Michael Brown. Since then, federal officials have recalled more than 1,800 items, which have been destroyed through target practice or otherwise disposed of, officials say.

But state and local police organizations have protested, insisting that military-style vehicles and gear help protect officers' lives and public safety—for example, a privately manufactured, tracked armored vehicle played a key role in the police response to the mass shooting at a county government building in San Bernardino, California, in December 2015.

During his campaign, Trump sided with the police. In September, he promised to rescind the executive order in a written response to a Fraternal Order of Police questionnaire that helped him win an endorsement from the organization of rank-and-file officers.

"The 1033 program is an excellent program that enhances community safety. I will rescind the current executive order," reads the response posted on the group's website.

"We take him at his word," Executive Director James Pasco said in a recent telephone interview.

The Trump transition team did not respond to questions from The Associated Press about the executive order.

National Sheriffs' Association Executive Director Jonathan F. Thompson said his group has pressed the topic in discussions with Trump's transition team. And William J. Johnson, executive director of the National Association of Police Organizations, said he was encouraged by his conversations with Trump representatives before the Nov. 8 election.

"The feeling that we got is they absolutely hear us and they share our concerns," he said.

Obama's order was triggered partly by police use of military-style gear and vehicles in response to the 2014 unrest in Ferguson.

Patrons use dough to back pizza place targeted by fake news

WASHINGTON (AP)—There's at least a slice of good news for a pizza restaurant in the nation's capital caught up in fake news stories about a child sex trafficking ring run by prominent Democrats.

In the days since a conspiracy theorist showed up and fired an assault weapon inside Comet Ping Pong, supporters of the restaurant have turned out in droves to buy pizzas and leave homemade signs and flowers.

More than 2,000 people said on Facebook that they're going to this weekend's "Stand With Comet" event to support the pizza place and other neighborhood restaurants targeted by fake news fanatics.

John McKeel walked out of Comet Ping Pong Friday carrying "The Smoky," with mushrooms and bacon; and "The Jimmy," topped with meatballs. But McKeel wasn't just coming for the food.

"I had to come today" to support the restaurant, said McKeel, 39, of Alexandria, Virginia.

The Facebook page urged people to support not only Comet Ping Pong but other nearby stores that have been subjected to harassing and threatening online comments and phone calls since the fake news stories began spreading.

"If they run out of dough today, that'd be a good thing," said Erick Sanchez, the event's organizer.

So many came out Friday that people waited an hour and a half for a table and carry-out took 45 minutes. Other local restaurants spontaneously sent over wait staff to help. Others sent food for employees.

The restaurant also is getting support online, where a GoFundMe page set up to help it pay for legal expenses and extra security had passed $15,000, with a goal of $28,000.

Interim District of Columbia Police Chief Peter Newsham visited Friday, with a message for fake news peddlers.

"It's not funny. It's serious. It can have very, very serious consequences," he said, adding that police are following up on the harassment and threats local businesses have received.

The man police arrested Sunday at Comet Ping Pong, Edgar Maddison Welch, has a court hearing next week. Police have said the 28-year-old from Salisbury, N.C., fired shots from an AR-15 assault weapon after coming to "self-investigate" the conspiracy theory known as "pizzagate."

He surrendered peacefully "when he found no evidence that underage children were being harbored in the restaurant," police said.

Joey Allen, the marketing and events manager for the District Restaurant Group, which owns the nearby Jake's American Grille, says its restaurant also was harassed with calls related to the conspiracy. At one point the calls were daily, Allen said.

At Comet Ping Pong, the staff seemed to be in a good mood Friday, said Carrie Gillispie, 34, visiting with her husband. She wasn't bothered by the lines for tables.

AP

This Dec. 5, 2016 file photo shows the front door of Comet Ping Pong pizza shop, in Washington. There's at least a slice of good news for the pizza restaurant in the nation's capital that has been the target of fake news stories linking it to a child sex trafficking ring.

Families of California salon shooting victims urge plea deal

SEAL BEACH, Calif. (AP)—Families of some victims of a mass killing at a Seal Beach hair salon want prosecutors to accept a plea deal from the convicted killer, saying they're exhausted by years of legally wrangling in a case marred by prosecutorial misconduct.

Some relatives of the eight people Scott Dekraai was convicted of slaying urged authorities Saturday to accept his offer of taking a life sentence without chance of parole rather than seek the death penalty, the Orange County Register reported (http://bit.ly/2gzVasG).

Four families took part in the news conference.

"Our intent here is the simple acknowledgment that the case is fatally flawed and is currently positioned for a lifetime of appeals," said Hattie Stretz, who was wounded and lost her daughter, Laura Webb Elody, in the 2011 attack.

"We have no choice but to collectively agree we do not want the death penalty pursued," said Paul Wilson, whose wife, Christy, was killed. "We are exhausted from this continuous pain, and this has got to be over with. Life will never be the same for us, but we should have the chance to move on."

Other relatives of victims disagreed, saying they want Dekraai to face the death penalty, but all acknowledged their unhappiness with the length of trial proceedings and appeals.

Dekraai, a former tugboat crew member, had been locked in a custody dispute with his hairstylist ex-wife, Michelle Fournier, over their 8-year-old son when he entered Salon Meritage on Oct. 12, 2011. He wore a bullet-proof vest and was armed with three weapons.

Dekraai shot and killed Fournier before turning his guns on the salon owner, stylists and customers and a man sitting in his car in the parking lot. He was arrested within minutes of the rampage and pleaded guilty to murder.

But then Dekraai's public defender, Scott Sanders, accused authorities of trying to cover up an informant program that had trained jailhouse snitches to sidle up to high-profile defendants and elicit information from them in violation of their constitutional rights.

A judge found that Orange County prosecutors failed to turn over evidence about an informant who spoke with Dekraai and barred them from using it.

After Sanders uncovered additional jail records that had not been mentioned by sheriff's deputies during their testimony about jailhouse informants, the judge removed the district attorney's office from the penalty phase of Dekraai's trial.

The case was handed to the state attorney general's office, which appealed. Last month, an appellate court upheld the decision, saying there were "real" and "systemic" abuses by prosecutors and law enforcement.

Meanwhile, six murder and attempted murder cases have unraveled because of concerns over informants.

ACROSS THE NATION

South Carolina police: Man killed amid gunfire with officers

SUMTER, S.C. (AP)—Authorities say a call reporting a domestic dispute at South Carolina's Sumter Mall resulted in the fatal shooting of a man in an exchange of gunfire with police. Police responded to a call Saturday evening reporting a woman was afraid to leave the mall because an estranged boyfriend was seen outside pointing a gun at her vehicle, police spokeswoman Tonyia McGirt says. A police statement identified the man as 35-year-old Waltki Cermoun Williams of Sumter, adding he drove off at high speed in an SUV with police pursuing. The statement says Williams crashed into two vehicles and fled on foot. It added a brief struggle ensued between Williams and police, followed by gunfire. The number of officers involved wasn't disclosed, nor their race or Williams'. No one else was injured.

USGS records several small earthquakes across Oklahoma

WAUKOMIS, Okla. (AP)—Several small earthquakes have been recorded during the weekend across Oklahoma, the largest being a magnitude 3.7 temblor near Waukomis. No damage or injuries are reported. The quake near Waukomis, about 60 miles northwest of Oklahoma City, was recorded early Saturday by the U.S. Geological Survey. Magnitude 3.3 earthquakes were recorded Sunday morning near Perry, about 55 miles north of Oklahoma City, and on Saturday near Mooreland, 110 miles northwest of Oklahoma City. Three quakes ranging from magnitude 2.5 to 2.9 were recorded near McLoud, Okarche and Perry. Oklahoma's earthquakes have been linked the underground disposal of wastewater from oil and gas production. State regulators have shut down or imposed new restrictions on wells used for wastewater disposal.

Funeral: Hundreds honor Georgia officer slain with colleague

AMERICUS, Ga. (AP)—Hundreds of people paid their last respects during a funeral and burial Sunday for a Georgia police officer shot and killed with his best friend and fellow officer last week.

A horse-drawn carriage carried the body of Americus police officer Nicholas Smarr, 25, his casket draped with the American flag and led by an honor guard, The Atlanta-Journal Constitution (http://on-ajc.com/2hjC4pc) reported. Mourners lined the route of the procession, somberly waving flags as some wiped away tears.

Smarr and Jody Smith, a 26-year-old officer with Georgia Southwestern State University, were shot and killed while responding to a domestic violence call Wednesday in Americus in south Georgia. Authorities said the suspected shooter died Thursday of a self-inflicted gunshot wound following a manhunt.

Americus Police Chief Mark Scott spoke at Sunday's funeral. He said that even after Smarr was shot, he performed CPR on his wounded friend. Smarr died at the scene, and Smith a day later at a hospital.

George Saratsiotis, proprietor of an area menswear shop, said the two officers were regular customers of his. He said the close-knit Georgia community has been shocked by the slayings, adding "the atmosphere in the town is very sad. Everybody is talking to each other and trying to help each other right now."

"It's not fair for them to go so young," he told the newspaper.

Smarr was the sixth law enforcement officer fatally shot in Georgia this year, double the total killed by guns in the previous two years combined, according to The Atlanta-Journal Constitution. When Smith died the following day, he became the seventh officer killed by gunfire in 2016, the newspaper added.

Police have said Smarr was responding to the call Wednesday when he and Smith were fired upon. They were both shot after Smith went to back up Smarr at an apartment complex just south of the university campus, according to authorities.

Minquell Lembrick, 32, the suspect in the shootings, was found dead Thursday from an apparent self-inflicted gunshot wound, police have said.

Friends and family had gathered Friday at Georgia Southwestern to remember the officers, who had been friends since fourth grade and shared an apartment in Sumter County. "I have cried and cried and I know I'm going to cry and cry for a long time," Sharron Johnson said to about 200 people who'd gathered for that candle-light vigil for her son, Jody Smith, and Smarr.

Funeral services for Smith have not yet been announced.

Asia

New Zealand's new prime minister is steady, not flashy

WELLINGTON, New Zealand (AP)—There's nothing flashy about Bill English. Critics say the former finance minister and farmer who became New Zealand's prime minister on Monday is downright boring. But English hopes his steadiness and experience in handling the economy will prove reassuring when New Zealanders go to the polls next year.

For the past eight years, the 54-year-old has played the role of dependable deputy to the more charismatic John Key. And it seemed it would stay that way heading into the 2017 election, until Key shocked the nation last week by resigning.

English was chosen as the new leader by the conservative National Party caucus after two other candidates for the job withdrew last week.

A practicing Roman Catholic, English is more conservative than Key on social issues. He is opposed to abortion and euthanasia, although he said Monday that he's changed his mind on gay marriage, which he voted against when it was legalized in New Zealand three years ago.

"Just seeing the impact it's had with couples, I think it doesn't erode marriage," he said. "In some ways, it's an affirmation of the concept."

English said he won't use his new role to try to influence policy on such issues, which are often left to the conscience of individual lawmakers rather than voted on by party affiliation.

In this May 26, 2016 photo, Finance Minister Bill English, right, walks with New Zealand Prime Minister John Key to the House to deliver his Budget 2016 speech, in Wellington, New Zealand. AP

In some ways, English embodies the qualities that many New Zealanders value, casting himself as a down-to-earth rural bloke, a father-of-six who believes in hard work and steps into the limelight with some reluctance.

But his history is more complicated. He studied commerce and then literature at university, graduating with an honors degree. He did work briefly as a farmer but has been a politician for most of his career, after he was first elected to Parliament 26 years ago.

He rose to become leader of his party in 2001 and led them to a disastrous defeat in an election the following year. The National Party gained just 21 percent of the vote, its worst-ever showing.

After he was replaced as leader in 2003, it seemed his star had faded. But he learned from that defeat, he said.

This time, he has his economic record to highlight. After becoming finance minister in 2008, English helped the nation weather the global downturn and has since helped return annual GDP growth to more than 3 percent and unemployment to below 5 percent.

He's put a lot of emphasis on getting the government books into shape and has managed to return small budget surpluses over the past couple of years. His economic platform remains more prudent than exciting.

"In the coming months and years we will focus on building the roads, public transport, schools and houses needed to support a strong economy and a growing population," English said. "We'll also focus on better incomes for households, safer communities, and smarter government support for the most vulnerable."

One of his biggest challenges will be curbing runaway house prices which have made it difficult for working families to buy homes, especially in the biggest city, Auckland.

English will also find it hard to emulate his predecessor's ability to charm other leaders and elevate New Zealand's role in world affairs. Key played golf with President Barack Obama and helped New Zealand secure a temporary seat on the U.N. Security Council.

"We've had a period of a good relationship between John Key and President Obama, and that's now changed," English said. "As a small country, we have to do all of the work."

Key, who said he wanted to leave while he was on top of his game and spend more time with his family, said he didn't expect English would travel much next year as he focused domestically on the election. But Key said English would build relationships over time and already had a good international reputation as finance minister.

Philippine president says he'll accept China arms deal offer

MANILA, Philippines (AP)—Philippine President Rodrigo Duterte said Sunday that he has decided to accept an arms deal being offered by China under concessional terms, in the latest sign of cozying relations between the once-hostile neighbors.

Duterte said in a speech before troops that he'll ask his defense secretary to send military officials to China to receive the firearms, which will be payable over 25 years. He did not provide further details.

"China is pressing me on the firearms, which are already there. I'll accept them. They're rushing it," Duterte said.

"We don't need to ask from others because they're willing to give it," he said. "This isn't free, but it's actually a grant payable in 25 years."

Defense Secretary Delfin Lorenzana said the military is also considering purchasing sniper rifles from Russia, adding that the Philippine army and marines would undertake a study to see whether a deal could be forged. Lorenzana visited Russia last week on Duterte's order to meet defense officials, the first-ever visit by a Philippine defense chief to Moscow since diplomatic ties were established in 1976, officials said.

"If their sniper rifles are superior as they claim, we may decide to acquire," Lorenzana told The Associated Press. "The army and marines will conduct tests and determine how many they may require."

Duterte reached out to China and Russia after taking office in June while taking a hostile stance with the Obama administration after the latter criticized his deadly war on drugs.

The Philippines has heavily depended on the U.S., its treaty ally, for weapons, ships and aircraft for years, although it has turned to other countries for defense equipment as it struggled to modernize its underfunded military in recent years.

Indonesia nabs woman, others in thwarted Jakarta bomb plot

JAKARTA, Indonesia (AP)—Indonesian police said they safely detonated a bomb on the outskirts of the capital after arresting a female would-be suicide bomber and other suspected Islamic militants who were allegedly planning to attack the presidential palace this weekend.

The thwarted plot is likely to cause particular concern in Indonesia because of the possibility that women with militant network associations are now being recruited into more active roles, including plotting and carrying out attacks.

"This marks a new chapter of terrorism in Indonesia, where the suicide bombing was to be carried out by a woman," terrorism analyst Ridwan Habib said in an interview with Indonesian TV.

Umar Surya Fana, the police chief of Bekasi, a Jakarta satellite city, said the militants were followed by a police counterterrorism squad as they drove to Jakarta from Solo in central Java. The city is known for its radical mosques and Islamic boarding schools.

Police said two men were arrested after dropping the 27-year-old woman at the boarding house with the pressure cooker bomb. A fourth suspect, a man, was arrested in Solo, said Jakarta police spokesman Argo Yuwono.

The bomb potentially could have caused damage within a wide area, Yuwono said.

People living within a 300-meter (yard) radius of the boarding house were evacuated during the police operation on Saturday.

3 Filipino soldiers dead, 17 wounded in clash with militants

MANILA, Philippines (AP)—Three Filipino soldiers were killed and 17 others wounded in nearly two hours of fighting with about 150 Muslim militants in the south, the military said Sunday.

The Abu Sayyaf gunmen withdrew after the fierce clash on Saturday in the mountains of Patikul town in Sulu province, and are being pursued by government forces, said regional military spokesman Maj. Filemon Tan.

An unspecified number of militants were either wounded or killed in the latest flare-up in a monthslong offensive ordered by President Rodrigo Duterte. Tan said the troops were backed by assault aircraft and artillery fire.

The militants were led by Radulan Sahiron, a one-armed commander long wanted by the U.S. and Philippine governments for his alleged role in kidnappings for ransom and other acts. The Abu Sayyaf, an offshoot of a decadeslong Muslim rebellion in the predominantly Roman Catholic nation's south, have survived numerous military offensives, partly thanks to money earned from kidnappings.

In neighboring Malaysia, security forces killed three Abu Sayyaf gunmen and captured two others in a failed kidnapping attempt in Malaysia's Sabah state near the southern Philippines on Thursday. Two other militants were missing after their speedboat was hit by gunfire and sank.

Among those killed was Abraham Hamid, an Abu Sayyaf militant who, the Philippine military said, acted as a spotter in the kidnappings of two Canadians, a Norwegian and a Filipina in the southern Philippines last year. The two Canadians were beheaded and the other two hostages were freed reportedly in exchange for ransom.

Duterte and his Malaysian and Indonesian counterparts have struggled to deal with a wave of attacks by the Abu Sayyaf and allied gunmen who target tugboats and cargo ships in the busy sea waterway. The ransom kidnappings of Malaysian and Indonesian crewmen have continued despite heightened coastal and border security.

World

US says 2K IS fighters killed, gravely wounded in Mosul

QAYARA AIR BASE, Iraq (AP)—Iraqi and U.S.-led coalition forces have killed or gravely wounded more than 2,000 Islamic State fighters in the battle for Mosul since October, the top U.S. commander in Iraq said Sunday.

Lt. Gen. Stephen Townsend told reporters there are still an estimated 3,000 to 5,000 IS fighters defending Mosul. He applauded the efforts of Iraqi security forces, who began their offensive on Oct. 17 in what has been billed a decisive phase of the anti-IS fight.

"By our calculations, we think we have killed or badly wounded over 2,000," Townsend said at a joint news conference with U.S. Defense Secretary Ash Carter at Qayara air base.

Iraqi security forces have been slowed in their nearly two-month-old offensive against IS, which has occupied Mosul for more than two years. US officials have declined to say how many Iraqi government troops have been killed in the Mosul fight.

Recapturing the city, Iraq's second-largest, is crucial to the Iraqis' hopes of restoring their sovereignty, although political stability will likely remain a challenge afterward.

Iraqi forces have only won back a handful of eastern Mosul neighborhoods since launching the offensive in mid-October. On Sunday they came under mortar fire as they worked to clear villages along the Tigris River to the south, part of operations to secure supply lines for a campaign that is likely to stretch into the coming year.

Townsend disputed any suggestion that the Islamic State has managed to fight the Iraqi government forces to standstill in Mosul.

After citing the estimated 2,000 IS casualties, he added, "I don't think that suggests anything about a stalemate. This is a major urban area. Any army on the planet, including the United States Army, would be challenged by this fight."

AP

A policeman secures houses as Iraqi federal police forces advance towards the Islamic State militant held city of Mosul, Iraq, Saturday, Dec. 10, 2016.

"The Iraqi army has come back from near-defeat two years ago, and now they are attacking this major city," Townsend said. "I don't think there is anything in there about a stalemate." Mosul is about 250 miles from Baghdad.

Townsend said U.S. intelligence estimated before the Mosul campaign kicked off that IS had 3,500 to 6,000 fighters in the city. He said the current estimate is 3,000 to 5,000.

Pentagon chief Carter made an unannounced visit Sunday to the Qayara base, flying in from Baghdad after meeting with Prime Minister Haider al-Abadi and sharing lunch with American troops. It was Carter's first visit to Qayara since it began operating as an Iraqi staging base in October.

Carter toured the air base, greeting soldiers and offering holiday wishes. He assured them the Mosul campaign is on track.

"Everything is going according to the plan of a year ago," Carter said.

On Saturday in Bahrain, Carter announced he is sending another 200 troops to Syria to train and advise local fighters combatting IS. There are already 300 U.S. troops authorized for the Syria effort, and some 5,000 in Iraq.

Carter told an international security conference in Bahrain that the battle for Mosul and for the Syrian city of Raqqa, the de facto capital of the extremists' self-described caliphate, would be crucial for defeating the group, which has claimed attacks worldwide.

"The seizure of these two cities is necessary to...put ISIL on an irreversible path to a lasting defeat," he said, using another acronym for IS.

He did not predict how long it might take for Iraqi forces to prevail in Mosul, but he sounded a note of optimism.

"This is a complex mission that will take time to accomplish, but I am confident that ISIL's days in Mosul are numbered," he said in Bahrain.

WORLD BRIEFS

IMF chief Lagarde faces negligence trial in France

PARIS (AP)—Christine Lagarde is taking time off her day job solving the world's financial crises to face trial Monday, accused of negligence after the French state handed $425 million to a tycoon close to the president in 2008. The well-respected, silver-haired head of the International Monetary Fund denies wrongdoing in the case, which dates to her time in the French government when she was economy and finance minister. The trial is due to last until Dec. 20. Lagarde, 60, faces up to a year in prison and a 15,000-euro ($16,000) fine if convicted of negligence. The judges are expected to return a verdict in the wake of the last hearing but they can also announce a ruling at a later date. Lagarde's upcoming trial and possible conviction may raise concern about her ability to remain IMF boss.

Iran seals deal with Boeing to buy 80 planes worth $16.6B

TEHRAN, Iran (AP)—Iran's flag carrier finalized a major deal with U.S. plane maker Boeing Co. to buy $16.6 billion worth of passenger planes Sunday in one of the most tangible benefits yet for the Islamic Republic from last year's landmark nuclear agreement. Iran Air's deal for 80 jetliners is the biggest agreement Iran has struck with an American company since the 1979 revolution and U.S. Embassy takeover. It has the potential to transform Iran's creaking and accident-prone aviation industry, which has been hobbled by years of sanctions. Those curbs have prevented the country from buying new planes from Chicago-based Boeing and European rival Airbus, and in many cases made it difficult for Iranian airlines to secure much-needed spare parts.

Bombing at Egypt's main Coptic Christian cathedral kills 25

CAIRO (AP)—A bombing at a chapel adjacent to Egypt's main Coptic Christian cathedral killed 25 people and wounded another 49 during Sunday Mass, one of the deadliest attacks carried out against the religious minority in recent memory and a grim reminder of Egypt's difficult struggle to restore security and stability after nearly six years of turmoil. The attack came two days after a bomb elsewhere in Cairo killed six policemen, an assault claimed by a shadowy group that authorities say is linked to the outlawed Muslim Brotherhood. That group—called "Hasm," or "Decisiveness"—distanced itself from the attack in a statement issued Sunday night, saying it does not as a principle kill women, children, the elderly or worshippers.

Crash exposes gulf between Brazilians and their leaders

RIO DE JANEIRO (AP)—As Brazilians mourned the recent plane crash that killed 71 people, including almost an entire soccer team, President Michel Temer spent days publicly wavering about whether to attend the memorial service in the southern city of Chapeco.

His allies in congress were even less tactful: They launched an around-the-clock session seeking to gut anti-corruption legislation on the same day people learned of the disaster, spurring violent protests in the capital of Brasilia.

Coming from an already deeply unpopular government, the bungled response to what is seen as a national tragedy has angered Brazilians to the point where analysts say it has put Temer's ambitious plans to cut spending and overhaul the pension system in jeopardy. And there are increasing calls, mostly from opposition politicians but also ordinary citizens, for Temer to be impeached just like his predecessor.

"The tragedy of the Chapecoense team was not only a missed opportunity for the president, it was also damaging," said Carlos Manhanelli, chairman of the Brazilian Association of Political Consultants. "Once more it gave the impression that politicians don't care about normal people."

The plane crashed outside Medellin, Colombia, late on the night of Nov. 28. The next morning Brazilians woke up to the shocking news, including that 19 players on the Chapecoense soccer club were among the dead.

Temer, the former vice president who took over the top job in August after President Dilma Rousseff was removed from office for breaking fiscal responsibility laws, called for three days of national mourning. But Temer's solemn words were not heeded by his legislative allies.

That night one chamber of congress rushed through an unpopular spending-cut measure, while the other moved to weaken anti-corruption legislation and even add penalties for prosecutors and judges who overstep their power.

The measure on corruption was particularly galling for many Brazilians as about 60 percent of sitting lawmakers are under investigation or already charged with wrongdoing - mostly graft, according to local watchdog groups. A sweeping probe into a kickback scheme at state oil company Petrobras has snared dozens of top politicians and business executives in recent months.

Turkey blasts claimed by Kurdish militants; country mourns

ISTANBUL (AP)—Turkey declared a national day of mourning and paid tribute to the dead Sunday after two bombings in Istanbul killed 38 people and wounded 155 others near a soccer stadium. The carnage was claimed by a Turkey-based Kurdish militant group.

The Kurdistan Freedom Falcons, or TAK, said two of its members had sacrificed their lives in the Saturday night attack that targeted security forces outside the Besiktas stadium shortly after the conclusion of a match.

"Two of our comrades were heroically martyred in the attack," according to a statement posted on TAK's website.

It described the blasts as reprisal for state violence in the southeast and the ongoing imprisonment of Abdullah Ocalan, the leader of the Kurdistan Workers' Party, or PKK. TAK is considered by authorities as a PKK offshoot.

The twin car-and-suicide bombings near the stadium enraged top officials, including President Recep Tayyip Erdogan, who vowed to hunt down the perpetrators. The attack was the latest large-scale assault to traumatize a nation confronting an array of security threats.

Turkey is a NATO member and a partner in the U.S.-led war against the Islamic State group.

The attack targeted police officers, killing 30 of them along with seven civilians and an unidentified person, Turkish Interior Minister Suleyman Soylu told reporters. He said 13 people had been arrested in connection with the "terrorist" act.

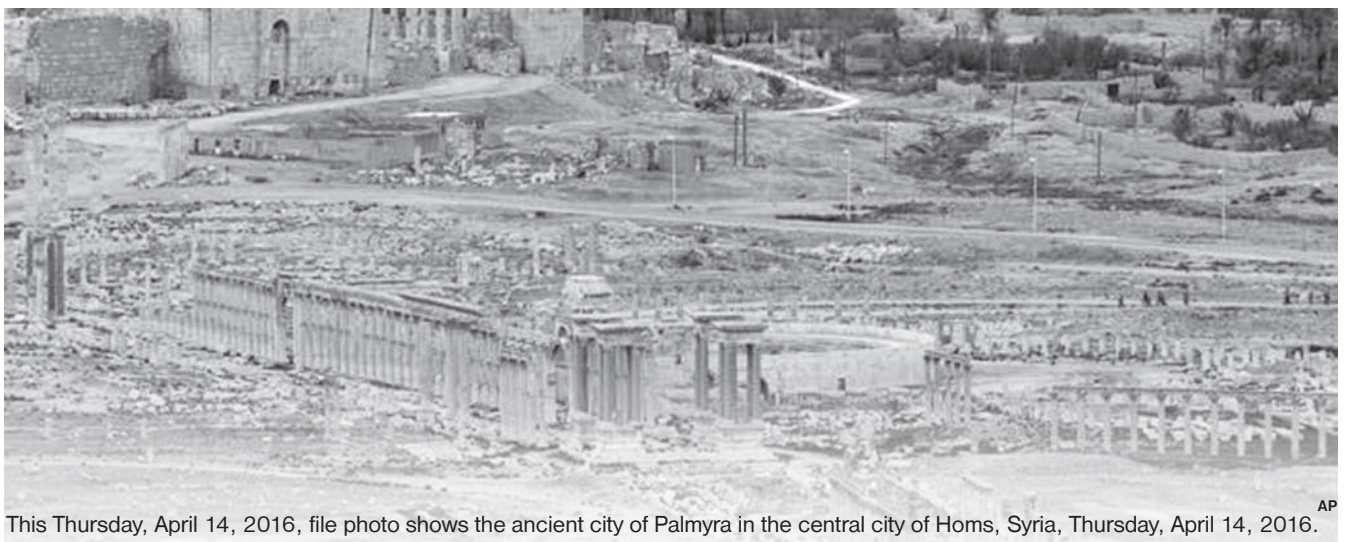
In an address at a funeral for the slain police officers before TAK's statement was released, a furious Soylu condemned Kurdish rebels and their allies in the West, referring to the PKK as "animals."

"Have you accomplished anything beyond being the servants, pawns and hit men of certain dark forces, of your dark Western partners?" he asked.

Turkish officials didn't make any further comments after the TAK claim of responsibility was posted.

The battle between the PKK and the Turkish state has resulted in the deaths of tens of thousands of citizens. Turkish officials frequently accuse the West of supporting the Kurdish insurgency and of interfering in Ankara's fight against the militants.

Focus



This Thursday, April 14, 2016, file photo shows the ancient city of Palmyra in the central city of Homs, Syria, Thursday, April 14, 2016. AP

Militants retake ancient city of Palmyra from Syrian forces

Islamic State militants recaptured the ancient city of Palmyra from Syrian troops Sunday, according to both sides in the battle, scoring a major advance after a year of setbacks in Syria and neighboring Iraq.

In winning back Palmyra, the extremist group appeared to be taking advantage of the Syrian and Russian preoccupation with Aleppo, timing its attack to coincide with a major government offensive to capture the last remaining opposition-held neighborhoods in the northern city.

Palmyra, with its towering 2,000-year-old ruins, holds mostly symbolic meaning in the wider civil war, although its location in central Syria also gives it some strategic significance.

Islamic State militants reentered the city Saturday for the first time since they were expelled by Syrian and Russian forces amid much fanfare nine months ago. The government's first important win against the Islamic State group in the historic city gave Damascus the chance to try to position itself as part of the global anti-terrorism campaign.

The militants had spent 10 months in Palmyra, during which they blew up a number of temples and caused other destruction—severing the heads of statues and partially damaging two temples and famous arch.

Maamoun Abdulkarim, Syria's official for antiquities and museums, said his department had transferred the contents of Palmyra's museum to Damascus, but that he still worries about the safety of the ruins from the IS militants.

"I fear they will be more vengeful," Abdulkarim told The Associated Press.

Palmyra was a major tourist attraction before Syria's civil war began in 2011.

Sunday's takeover came hours after government troops and Russian air raids pushed the group out the city's perimeter. IS militants later regrouped and attacked from multiple sides, forcing government troops to retreat.

The militants went door to door, looking for any remaining forces loyal to President Bashar Assad, opposition activists in the city said.

Homs provincial Gov. Talal Barazi told the pan-Arab Mayadeen news channel that the IS attack on Palmyra is a "desperate" reaction to the Syrian government's recent military "victories."

Scores of Syrian troops reportedly have been killed in fighting around Palmyra in recent days. While a distraction from the battle for Aleppo, it is unlikely to affect the government's final push on the last rebel-held neighborhoods in the northern city. By Sunday evening, there was no sign the army was shifting significant resources from Aleppo.

The government and its allies reportedly have mobilized some 40,000 fighters for Aleppo.

"I don't think the regime would withdraw forces from Aleppo to Palmyra and risk losing Aleppo," said Rami Abdurrahman, the head of the Syrian Observatory for Human Rights, an opposition monitoring group. "I think the regime's priority now is to finish the battle for Aleppo before the end of the month for sure. As for Palmyra, the whole international community would stand by it against IS."

In the last year, IS has suffered defeats in both Syria and Iraq, losing several towns and cities it had captured in 2014.

It is now under attack in Mosul, Iraq's second-largest city and the last major urban center it controls in the country. Since the Mosul offensive began nearly two months ago, Iraqi and U.S.-led coalition forces have killed or gravely wounded more than 2,000 IS fighters, said Lt. Gen. Stephen Townsend, the top U.S. commander in Iraq. He made his remarks at a news conference with U.S. Defense Secretary Ash Carter at Qayara air base in Iraq.

On Saturday, Carter announced he is sending another 200 troops to Syria to train and advise local fighters combatting IS. There are already 300 U.S. troops authorized for the Syria effort, and some 5,000 in Iraq.

A Kurdish-led Syrian force, backed by the U.S., is also pushing toward Raqqa, the group's de-facto capital in Syria, from the north. Meanwhile, Turkey is backing Syrian opposition fighters who have reached the outskirts of al-Bab, the IS stronghold in northern Syria.

In going for Palmyra, IS picked a soft target to demonstrate that it retains the ability to carry out large attacks despite its battlefield losses.

Mohammed Hassan al-Homsi, who runs the Palmyra News Network, said IS was steering away from northern Syria, where Turkey and the anti-IS international coalition have focused their fight. The militants are eyeing new territory, and they chose Palmyra for its desert terrain linked to Iraq and its surrounding oil and gas fields, al-Homsi said.

The state news agency SANA, quoting an unidentified military official, reported that the militant group received reinforcements from Raqqa.

Russia's Defense Ministry put some of the blame on the coalition, saying it had scaled down its operation against Raqqa and allowed thousands of IS fighters to escape Mosul. The ministry said more than 4,000 militants have been deployed for the Palmyra takeover, implying those attacking the city recently had left Mosul.

The Observatory and the Palmyra Coordination group said IS militants used a multipronged assault, forcing government forces to retreat south. A map distributed by the Observatory shows the IS-controlled areas extend east, south and north of Palmyra. They encompass a number of strategic hills around the city and expand the group's presence in rural parts of Homs province, Syria's largest, which is mostly under government control.

Osama al-Khatib of the activist-run Palmyra Coordination group, which keeps in touch with residents, said remaining government and allied troops were escaping from the southwestern edge of the city, where the ancient ruins are. The few remaining families also are trying to leave, he said.

Al-Homsi's Palmyra News Network said intense airstrikes followed the IS takeover. The group said IS fired on fleeing civilian.

In a video by the IS-linked Aamaq news agency, IS fighters were shown roaming a main square that appeared deserted below the citadel that overlooks the ruins and the Palmyra Museum.

Russia had earlier said it repelled an IS attack, launching 64 airstrikes overnight that killed 300 militants. But hours later, the activists said IS had seized a castle just outside the town that overlooks its famed Roman-era ruins.

Expelling the IS militants last year was seen as a major triumph for Assad's forces, which previously had little success against the extremists.

The government and its Russian allies have since focused on the opposition in Damascus and Aleppo. After tightening the siege on eastern Aleppo, government and allied troops have been steadily carving into the rebel-held enclave since late November.

Of the original 45 square kilometers (17 square miles) of rebel-held area, only 7 square kilometers (4 square miles) remain in opposition hands, Syrian media said.

A look at Palmyra, the historic Syrian city retaken by IS

BEIRUT (AP)—A look at Palmyra, the archaeological gem that Islamic State fighters retook Sunday from Syrian troops in a major advance after a year of setbacks in Syria and neighboring Iraq.

LOCATION

A desert oasis surrounded by palm trees in central Syria, Palmyra is also a strategic crossroads linking the Syrian capital, Damascus, with the country's east and neighboring Iraq. Located 155 miles (215 kilometers) east of Damascus, the city was once home to 65,000 people before the Syrian civil war began. The Islamic State group captured the city in May 2015 and held it until May 2016, when they were forced out by a Syrian and Russian military campaign. However, most Palmyra residents did not return after it was retaken by the government. Activists estimated the city is now home to a few hundred families.

HISTORIC SIGNIFICANCE

A UNESCO world heritage site, Palmyra boasts 2,000-year-old towering Roman-era colonnades and priceless artifacts. Syrians affectionately refer to it as the "Bride of the Desert."

Palmyra was the capital of an Arab client state of the Roman Empire that briefly rebelled and carved out its own kingdom in the 3rd Century, led by Queen Zenobia. Before the war, it was Syria's top tourist attraction, drawing tens of thousands of visitors each year.

Palmyra was first mentioned in the archives of Mari in the 2nd millennium B.C., according to UNICEF's website. The town was the hub of a network of caravan trails that carried silks and spices from eastern Asia to the Mediterranean.

Palmyra became a prosperous region during the Hellenistic period and later became part of the Roman Empire. But its rebellious Queen Zenobia challenged Rome's authority. The city was plundered in A.D. 272 after she was captured during a long siege.

In more recent times, Palmyra has had darker associations for Syrians. It was home to the Tadmur prison, a notorious facility where thousands of opponents of President Bashar Assad's government were reportedly tortured. IS demolished the prison when it first controlled the city.

DESTRUCTION

Last year, IS destroyed the Temple of Bel, which dated back to A.D. 32, and the Temple of Baalshamin, a structure of stone blocks several stories high fronted by six towering columns. The militants also blew up the Arch of Triumph, which had been built under the Roman emperor Septimius Severus between A.D. 193 and A.D. 211. Maamoun Abdulkarim, Syria's head of the Antiquities and Museums Department based in Damascus, said despite the destruction, some 80 percent of the ancient ruins remained intact.

The extremists have destroyed ancient sites across their self-styled Islamic caliphate in Syria and Iraq, viewing them as monuments to idolatry. In August, IS militants beheaded Khaled al-Asaad, an 81-year-old antiquities scholar who had devoted his life to studying Palmyra. His body was later hung from a Roman column.

STRATEGIC IMPORTANCE

Over the last year, IS has suffered a string of defeats in both Syria and Iraq, losing several towns and cities it had captured in 2014. It is now under attack in Mosul, the last major urban center it controls in Iraq. A Kurdish-led Syrian force, backed by the U.S., is also pushing toward Raqqa, the group's de-facto capital in Syria, from the north. Meanwhile, Turkey is backing Syrian opposition fighters who have reached the outskirts of al-Bab, the IS stronghold in northern Syria.

In going for Palmyra, IS picked a soft target to demonstrate that despite its battlefield losses, it retains the ability to carry out large attacks.

With its losses in Iraq and elsewhere in Syria, the militants are eyeing new terrain. Mohammed Hassan al-Homsi, a native of the city who runs Palmyra News Network, said they chose Palmyra for its desert terrain linked to Iraq's and its surrounding oil and gas fields. It is also steering away from Syria's north, where the various anti- forces have focused their fight.

The extremist group also appeared to be taking advantage of the Syrian and Russian preoccupation with Aleppo, timing its attack to coincide with a massive government offensive to capture the last remaining opposition-held neighborhoods in the northern city.

Overdrive

Changes to the 2017 Mazda3 compact sedan are subtle, but improve Mazda's already renowned handling. TNS

AUTO REVIEW

2017 MAZDA3 COMPACT SEDAN HANDLES CROWDED CLASS

By ROBERT DUFFER
CHICAGO TRIBUNE

Mazda makes good cars. But with only six models in the U.S., including the two-seat roadster known as Miata, the marque doesn't get the exposure—or the dealer network—of larger makes. Yet few automakers can balance sportiness, fuel economy, style and premium-leaning trim levels as harmoniously as Mazda.

The compact Mazda3 is, on paper, a lot like the compact car competition. But a spin behind the wheel—better yet a thoroughly indulgent test drive—is key to understanding Mazda's essence, its feel, its ineffable competitive advantage.

Mazda3 gets a midcycle refresh to keep pace with evolutionary redesigns of the Honda Civic and Hyundai Elantra, as well as a new hatchback, the Chevy Cruze. Each model has merit for different reasons, with Mazda most appealing for the way it feels behind the wheel.

It doesn't look much different from the outside. The long nose and stretched wheelbase has always given the 3—and all Mazdas—an athletic stance. Updates are subtle: The narrow headlights extend from the wide grille more fluidly, and there are new 18-inch wheel options on the top of the various packages.

While we prefer the hatch ($750 more) to sedans and crossovers, the compact sedan tester was versatile enough to fit a mountain bike with the wheels on.

The compact came with the larger-displacement four-cylinder engine Mazda calls Skyactiv. Instead of a turbocharger, there is a higher compression ratio in the cylinders to deliver more power (or less fuel) per stroke. At just over 3,000 rpm, the 185 pound-feet of torque provides a potent punch of speed. Before that, it's up to you and the transmission to feed the need.

Fortunately, the Mazda3 came with the excellent six-speed manual. I'm not a purist or anachronist wishing for four on the floor and decrying all these newfangled dual-clutch things, but Mazda's manual gearbox should be used in driver's programs across the country for old and new drivers to understand how transmissions propel a car. It's smooth, simple and the clutch pedal provides plenty of grace to recover from letting off too quickly. You can row hard to simulate track fantasies or row easy to induce sleep in the smallest passengers.

The driver's connectedness with the car is Mazda's guiding principle, called jinba ittai. The biggest change to the Mazda3 is one that is very hard to notice without a back-to-back comparison.

In turns, the weight of the car shifts to the front wheels until accelerating again, when weight shifts to the rear. Mazda calls it G-Vectoring Control. Instead of torque vectoring, which uses individual braking to redirect torque to one of four wheels, Mazda's system automatically reduces engine torque a bit when the wheel is turned. Weight, or load, shifts to the front axle, just as it would under light braking or letting off the throttle. G-Vectoring is not braking, though, so it feels smoother, more linear, more secure. More precise steering means a reduced chance of overcorrecting, which is where most spinouts occur, especially in snow, ice or rain. It also minimizes body roll so the wheels and passengers stay more planted.

More controlled turning means safe drivers feel more secure, and less safe drivers can hit turns even faster. In short, it improves on what Mazda does best: handling.

The top-of-the-line Grand Touring trim of the test model is nice too at this price point. It comes with a heated steering wheel, leather-trimmed seats, satin nickel accents, and a sleek accordionlike cup holder cover. Room was made on the center console by replacing the ungainly parking brake handle with a small button. And of course, there is new safety technology available (for a reasonable $1,100), which includes lane keep and lane departure warnings.

Mazda says it added more sound-deadening insulation, but there is still a faint ticking sound at idle that can be heard from inside the cabin.

The Grand Touring trim, like Civic Touring, Cruze Premier, Focus Titanium, all come in at about $25,000. They're all so close in features and appointments that the deciding factor is personal taste over any objective criteria.

I like the feel of the Mazda3 over the competition, the way the controls are laid out, how the knob in the center console controls the large infotainment screen like German luxury models. In the crowded, homogenous compact class overshadowed by so many crossovers, the Mazda3 should not be overlooked. It deserves a second and third test drive.

NUTS & BOLTS

2017 Mazda3 GT at a glance

- **Vehicle type:** Compact sedan
- **Base price:** $23,145
- **As tested:** $26,045
- **Mpg:** 25 city, 34 highway
- **Engine:** 2.5-liter four-cylinder
- **Transmission:** Six-speed manual
- **Parting shot:** Good handling has gotten better.

Under the Hood: Continuously variable transmission should have no trouble with snow

By BRAD BERGHOLDT
TRIBUNE NEWS SERVICE

Q I've watched the automotive marketplace from the sidelines and have noticed that many manufacturers are going to the continuously variable transmission, or CVT, as their transmissions of choice. In fact, it seems that most manufacturers have stopped offering manual transmissions entirely.

I live in western Pennsylvania, where we have a lot of hills and get moderate amounts of snow and ice each winter. I've driven manual transmission cars and SUVs for over 35 years and like the control they offer in these conditions. I am concerned that a vehicle with a CVT might leave me, as they say, high and dry, or—more likely—stuck, cold and wet. What is your experience in situations like this? Thanks for your assistance.

Doug R.

A I confess to not having any personal experience with a CVT-equipped vehicle in snow, so I did a bunch of checking around in hopes of best answering your question.

CVTs have largely replaced manual and automatic transmissions on many new vehicles, limiting traditional choices. CVTs provide a seamless, shift-free application of torque by using two variable diameter pulleys and a steel belt. CVTs are lighter, simpler and more reliable than traditional transmissions and enhance fuel economy by a measurable amount. It does, though, take a little getting used to the almost continual drone of the engine when in automatic mode.

Most folks seem more than satisfied with how their CVT-equipped rides perform in snowy conditions, particularly with vehicles that include easy-to-use manual "shifting" controls. Subaru's X-Mode is a great example of how a vehicle can add slippery road countermeasures that reduce accelerator sensitivity, bring the CVT, anti-lock braking system, and stability control up on their collective toes, and provide descent control at lower vehicle speeds.

Q I just purchased a 2002 GMC pickup. When I start the engine on a cold morning, I hear a knocking sound that lasts for about 15 seconds before fading away. What is this? Is it harmful? Did I get snookered?

Eric P.

A I believe you're hearing piston slap, which is a fairly harmless condition caused by excessive piston clearance in one or more cylinders. The noise is caused by the pistons wobbling or striking the cylinder walls until they warm up and expand. Common to many GM truck engines of this vintage, this is caused by a short piston skirt design, rings pushed as high as can be on the pistons to reduce emissions, normal wear, and perhaps not the sweetest piston-cylinder fit when built.

While the noise is disconcerting and potentially lowers resale value, it really is harmless. If the noise lasted just a second or two, it could be bearing rattle, a much more serious issue.

Q My vehicle recently produced a misfire code relating to cylinder 1, and I've been thinking about replacing the spark plugs to see if that fixes the issue. Which cylinder is this on the engine?

Paul K.

A Cylinder 1 is the furthest forward (pulley end) on both an inline and a V-shaped engine. On V-engines, if you look closely, the cylinder banks are slightly staggered so the connecting rods of opposite cylinders can attach to the crankshaft. Other V-engine cylinder numberings depend on layout (as in, 12}56 or 135/246). If your engine is equipped with a coil-on-plug ignition system, swapping coils is a neat way to isolate a bad one.

Brad Bergholdt is an automotive technology instructor at Evergreen Valley College in San Jose, Calif. Readers may send him email at under-the-hood(at)earthlink.net; he cannot make personal replies.

Life & Style

Early audience reactions from 'Rogue One' premiere

LOS ANGELES (AP)—The force is strong with "Rogue One: A Star Wars Story" according to early reactions from the film's premiere Saturday night in Los Angeles.

Official reviews are under embargo until Tuesday morning in advance of the Dec. 16 release, but the crowd at the Pantages Theater went wild with applause as the credits rolled and took to social media to express their delight in the "Star Wars" spinoff film about the rebels who steal the plans for the Death Star. It's set right before the events of the original 1977 "Star Wars."

Comedian Dane Cook suggested on Twitter that it might be "the best" Star Wars movie, while Rainn Wilson called it "amazing."

Actor Wil Wheaton said he hadn't loved a Star Wars movie as much since the original.

Chris Taylor, author of the book "How Star Wars Conquered the Universe" wrote that the film was "heart-stopping and dark. Like darker than Empire Strikes Back dark."

There had been some handwringing from fans about the spinoff film when the public learned that the production was undergoing expensive reshoots and bringing in veteran scribe Tony Gilroy to help out which the script.

AP

Characters from "Rogue One: A Star Wars Story" appear at the film's world premiere at the Pantages Theatre on Saturday, Dec. 10, 2016, in Los Angeles.

Peter Sciretta, editor of the website Slashfilm.com, said that fans will be "very happy with Rogue One." He added that it didn't feel "neutered by reshoots." Steven Weintraub, editor of Collider.com, applauded the film's "incredible action" and script.

Many, like Entertainment Weekly's Anthony Breznican, singled out Donnie Yen's blind Jedi Chirrut Imwe and Alan Tudyk's droid K-2S0 as the standouts. The Daily Beast's Jen Yamato also praised Felicity Jones' heroine Jyn Erso and the film's "great hero turns."

"Rogue One" was directed by Gareth Edwards and also stars Diego Luna, Ben Mendelsohn, Riz Ahmed and Mads Mikkelsen. It's the first of three planned spinoff films set in the "Star Wars" universe.

John Glenn remembered by 'Hidden Figures' cast at premiere

NEW YORK (AP)—John Glenn, depicted in "Hidden Figures" as a space trailblazer who also gave critical support to pioneering black women at NASA who helped him orbit the earth, was fondly remembered by the cast at the movie's premiere.

"He's a hero. John Glenn was always on the right side of history. During a time when these women, because of their gender and the color of their skin, were often times treated like second-class citizens, he extended his hand out, and he trusted women, and women of color, with his life," said Janelle Monae, one of the film's stars.

Glenn, a former Democratic U.S. Senator, died last week at the age of 95. Also a former U.S. military pilot in World War II and the Korean War, he became a national hero in 1962 when he succeeded in circling Earth.

"Hidden Figures" tells the story of a trio of African-American mathematicians, also called "computers," at NASA in the early 1960s who helped get him there.

"Empire" star Taraji P. Henson portrays Katherine Johnson, the woman responsible for the calculations that led to Glenn's orbit. The other mathematicians are played by Monae and Oscar winner Octavia Spencer.

Glenn was instrumental in breaking down color and gender barriers at a time when it was unpopular. For Henson, Glenn signified what America is supposed to represent.

"When he decided to shake the colored computers' hands, he told them their lives matter. And in turn, Katherine told him his life mattered as she made it a point to get those numbers right, so he could come back home and see his family. So that's what it's all about. It's about pushing, putting our differences aside, and getting to a common goal. And that's moving humanity forward," Henson said.

Jim Parsons, who plays astronaut Tom Stafford in the film, also hailed Glenn.

"What's so interesting and sad and touching about him passing away right as this movie is coming out is that we are introducing three other major faces of that exact same movement," Parsons said. "As the film shows, John Glenn was one of the people who let one of these women into the room at a time when that wasn't being allowed."

Glen Powell portrays the legendary astronaut in film. He wished he had the chance to meet him.

'Moana's reigns, 'La La Land' sings in limited release

LOS ANGELES (AP)—Disney's "Moana" has continued to sit pretty atop the box office for its third consecutive weekend, but Damien Chazelle's musical "La La Land" was what really had audiences singing this weekend.

Playing in only five theaters, the lively and well-reviewed "La La Land" grossed a staggering $855,000 for Lionsgate, according to studio estimates Sunday. Its $171,000 per theater average is an all-time high for a five-theater release and for 2016 in general.

The film cost a reported $30 million to make and has been gaining buzz throughout the fall since it premiered at the Venice Film Festival and continued wowing critics and audiences at various other festivals. It recently picked up the best picture award from the New York Film Critics Circle and is expected to be a major awards contender this year. Its first big mainstream boost could come as early as Monday when nominations are announced for the Golden Globe awards.

Starring Emma Stone and Ryan Gosling, "La La Land" expands to 200 locations next week.

It was mostly business as usual among wide releases, with "Moana" in first with $18.8 million, followed by the Jennifer Aniston comedy "Office Christmas Party," which debuted to $17.5 million—a quiet moment before "Rogue One: A Star Wars Story" opens next weekend.

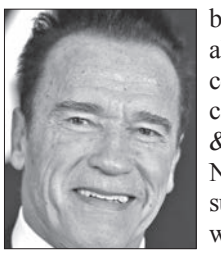
The rest of the top five looked similar to the past few weeks, with the Harry Potter spinoff "Fantastic Beasts and Where to Find Them" in third with $10.8 million, bringing its domestic grosses to $199.3 million. The Amy Adams and Jeremy Renner sci-fi pic "Arrival" held on in fourth with $5.6 million, while Disney and Marvel's "Doctor Strange" added $4.6 million to take fifth place.

The Jessica Chastain lobbying thriller "Miss Sloane," meanwhile, fizzled in its wide expansion, earning $1.9 million from 1,648 locations.

1. **"Moana,"** $18.8 million ($23.5 million international).
2. **"Office Christmas Party,"** $17.5 million ($16.4 million international).
3. **"Fantastic Beasts and Where to Find Them,"** $10.8 million ($33.1 million international).
4. **"Arrival,"** $5.6 million ($5.6 million international.)
5. **"Doctor Strange,"** $4.6 million ($1.6 million international).
6. **"Allied,"** $4 million ($4.8 million international).
7. **"Nocturnal Animals,"** $3.2 million ($1.2 million international).
8. **"Manchester by the Sea,"** $3.2 million.
9. **"Trolls,"** $3.1 million ($4 million international).
10. **"Hacksaw Ridge,"** $2.3 million ($15 million international).

Schwarzenegger: OK Trump is still a producer of 'Apprentice'

UNIVERSAL CITY, Calif. (AP)—Arnold Schwarzenegger, star of the new version of "Celebrity Apprentice," is unfazed that President-elect Donald Trump has retained a producer's stake in the show.



Schwarzenegger

Schwarzenegger said Friday that it's just business, comparable to his situation when he became California's governor and retained a screen credit and kept earning royalties for the "Terminator" movie.

"So, I think this is a contract that he had and I think it's great that he was part of it," Schwarzenegger said during a red-carpet event for NBC's "The New Celebrity Apprentice," which debuts Jan. 2.

Replacing Trump as boss in the reality show's boardroom meant "big shoes to fill," he added.

Cast members including Boy George, Nicole "Snooki" Polizzi and Eric Dickerson compete to raise money for charity, advised by Warren Buffett, Steve Ballmer and other financial heavyweights.

On Thursday, a spokeswoman for "Apprentice" creator Mark Burnett confirmed that Trump remains an executive producer on the latest edition of the long-running "Apprentice" franchise. The 13 episodes to air on NBC were produced by MGM, where Burnett is president of its TV and digital group, and were taped last February.

Trump tweeted with a defensive tone Saturday, saying he has "NOTHING to do with The Apprentice except for fact that I conceived it with Mark B & have a big stake in it. Will devote ZERO TIME!" Flubbing his spelling, he also criticized CNN's coverage of the story, calling it "rediculous & untrue - FAKE NEWS!" He later substituted the tweet with one that corrected his spelling of "ridiculous."

Trump's continued profit from a TV series is yet another unprecedented aspect of the election of a businessman and reality star to the presidency, with questions raised about how his holdings may intersect with his presidential decisions. The extent of his involvement with "Apprentice" is unclear, including how much he earns from it. The show last aired in 2015, and with Trump starring.

Trump spokeswoman Kellyanne Conway said Friday on CNN that his ties to the reality show are being reviewed by experts looking into the president-elect's business ties. She compared Trump's continued interest in the entertainment industry to President Barack Obama's off-hours golfing.

"Presidents have a right to do things in their spare time, in their leisure time, and nobody objects to that," she said.

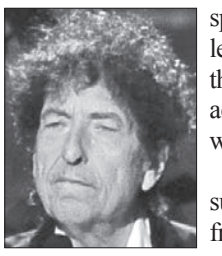
Tyra Banks, an adviser on the series, said Friday she had just learned of Trump's producer status "so I'm still processing."

TV personality Carrie Keagan, one of the contestants, said the show belongs to a different boss now.

"It's a brand-new show," she said. "It's an Arnold Schwarzenegger show now. It's his brand. There was no talk of anything else when we started the show. And hopefully there will be no more talk of anything else after."

Dylan expresses awe over Nobel Prize, alludes to Shakespeare

STOCKHOLM (AP) — Bob Dylan has expressed awe at receiving the Nobel Prize in literature and thanked the Swedish Academy for including him among the "giants" of writing.


Dylan

Dylan was absent from Saturday's award ceremony and banquet in Stockholm. But in remarks read by the U.S. ambassador, he alluded to the debate about whether the award should go to a songwriter.

Dylan said when Shakespeare wrote "Hamlet," he probably was thinking about which actors to pick and where to find a skull.

In his words: "I'm sure the farthest thing from Shakespeare's mind was: 'Is this literature?'"

Dylan said he too focuses on "mundane matters" such as recording in the right key, not on whether his songs are literature.

He thanked the Academy for considering the question and "providing such a wonderful answer."

'Toni Erdmann' sweeps European Film Awards, winning 5 awards

WARSAW, Poland (AP)— The German-Austrian drama "Toni Erdmann," written and directed by Maren Ade, swept this year's European Film Awards, winning five awards, including for best film, director and screenwriter.

"Toni Erdmann" also won best actress for Sandra Hueller and best actor for Peter Simonischek. The 29th European Film Awards took place Saturday in the Western Polish city of Wroclaw.

The show was peppered with political commentary by presenters, with a focus on the plight of refugees and Russia. Maria Alyokhina from the punk rock group Pussy Riot, whose members have been imprisoned for criticizing Russian President Vladimir Putin's, appealed for the release of Oleg Sentsov, a Ukrainian director carrying out a 20-year prison term in Russia on terrorism charges seen as politically motivated.

Bristol Palin announces she is expecting her third child

Bristol Palin is expecting her third child.

The daughter of former Alaska Gov. Sarah Palin announced her pregnancy Friday on Entertainment Tonight. She and husband Dakota Meyer said they are excited and "blessed" to welcome a baby in the spring.

A Palin family spokesman confirmed the 26-year-old is pregnant.

Bristol Palin launched an abstinence campaign after giving birth as an unwed teen. She had her son, Tripp, in December 2008 with former fiance Levi Johnston. She and Meyer had a daughter, Sailor Grace, in December 2015.

Bristol Palin also performed on "Dancing with the Stars" and had a short-lived cable TV show. ***(AP)***

AP
In this July 27, 2012 file photo, Bristol Palin attends the "Dancing with the Stars: All Stars" panel at the Disney ABC TCA Day 2 at the Beverly Hilton Hotel in Beverly Hills, Calif.

Netflix spokesperson says Prince discussed reality show

NEW YORK (AP)—Here's something else we lost with the death of Prince: A Netflix reality series centered on his Paisley Park home in Minnesota.

A Netflix spokesperson told The Associated Press on Saturday that the online entertainment company had been in "discussions" with Prince about a series, but that the project did not "come to fruition" before his death in April.

Photographer Maya Washington, a friend of the performer known for such hits as "Purple Rain" and "1999," told GQ recently that he had talked about the show and how he didn't want to be in it. "Why not? You're so funny," she told him. Answered Prince: "Maya, I can't be funny. I have to save the world."

'Brady Bunch' star fired after interview with gay actor

LOS ANGELES (AP)—A Los Angeles radio station says former "Brady Bunch" star Susan Olsen has been fired after she got into an online confrontation with openly gay actor Leon Acord-Whiting.

LA Talk Radio announced on Friday that it will not tolerate hateful speech and that it has severed ties with the host.

Us Weekly reports Acord-Whiting criticized Olsen, the co-host of "Two Chicks Talkin' Politics," after he was a guest on the show.

Olsen, 55, who played Cindy Brady in the TV show, posted on her Facebook page that Acord-Whiting blocked her "before I could even get one hit in."

Acord-Whiting later posted a screenshot of a Facebook message he says Olsen sent to him. In the screenshot, Olsen appears to call the actor an offensive term for gay men.

Daughter who values privacy keeps gabby mom at distance

DEAR ABBY: My mother has a tight circle of friends she socializes with often. They are all retired with grown children and grandchildren and eager to share every bit of news of their lives. Mom talks nonstop about her friends' children's parenting challenges, marital squabbles and medical issues. The challenge for me is that anything I tell her becomes fodder for their cocktail-hour discussion, which then gets around our community.

After hearing that the daughter of one of my mom's neighbors knew the results of my breast biopsy, I stopped sharing anything personal. This has damaged our relationship. She doesn't think mothers and daughters should keep secrets from each other, and I agree, but she also said she won't keep secrets from her friends.

I miss being able to turn to her for support, but do not want the world to know my business. I understand that her friends are like family to her, but they are not MY family, and I think she has chosen gossip over our relationship. Is keeping her at arm's length my only choice here, or is there another path that I can't see?

NONE OF THEIR BUSINESS

DEAR NONE OF THEIR BUSINESS: Your mother's judgment is terrible. Her friends may be "like family" to her, but they are not FAMILY. If you prefer not to have your personal business be fodder for lunchtime conversation, then your only choice is to carefully edit what you tell her.

DEAR ABBY: I have an issue with my daughter marrying a man who has no job. She has been supporting him financially. He has had a few jobs, but he gets fired or quits within a few weeks or months.

My daughter is 30 and never married. She's an assistant professor at a good university and a leader in her field of education. Her intended has no career and no prospects. He asked her to marry him without consulting me. Maybe I'm old-fashioned, but I would have expressed my concern about his lack of career.

I can't alienate my daughter by saying the wrong thing. But what if she can't work someday and he can't support a household? He has a million excuses. I don't think he's the man she thinks he is. My life lessons tell me he mhay never be the man she thinks he could be. I have come to the conclusion that marrying him would bring her only misery. What should I do?

VERY WORRIED DAD

DEAR VERY WORRIED DAD: It would not be wrong if, without putting her fiance down, you expressed to your daughter your concern about his employment record (or lack of one) and the impact it may have on their future. And when you do, raise the question of what she thinks might happen if for some reason she becomes unable to work, because it's a good one, and something she should carefully consider before tying the knot.

After that, accept that at 30, your daughter is an adult who has the right to go forward with the marriage if she chooses, and keep your fingers crossed.

Good advice for everyone – teens to seniors – is in "The Anger in All of Us and How to Deal With It." To order, send your name and mailing address, plus check or money order for $7 (U.S. funds) to: Dear Abby, Anger Booklet, P.O. Box 447, Mount Morris, IL 61054-0447. (Shipping and handling are included in the price.)

DEAR ABBY

By ABIGAIL VAN BUREN
UNIVERSAL PRESS SYNDICATE

Dear Abby is written by Abigail Van Buren, also known as Jeanne Phillips, and was founded by her mother, Pauline Phillips. Contact Dear Abby at www.DearAbby.com or P.O. Box 69440, Los Angeles, CA 90069.

Pastimes

Calvin and Hobbes

By Bill Waterson

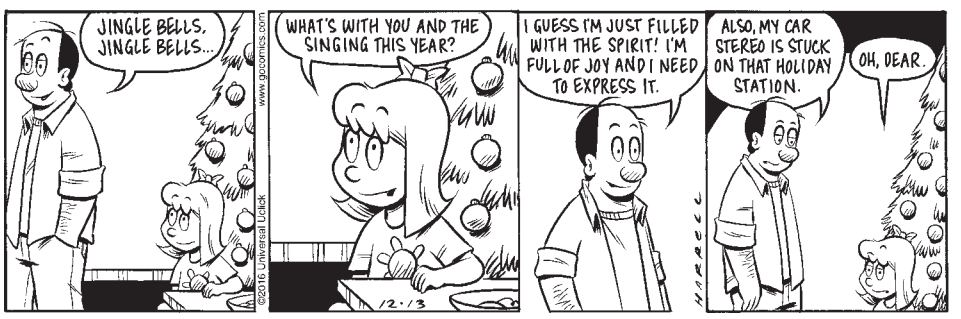
FWOOSHHH
GREETINGS, EARTH FEMALE. DO NOT BE ALARMED.
OUR PLANET IS DYING. WE NEED COOKIES TO SURVIVE. DO NOT TRY TO RESIST OR YOU WILL BE DESTROYED.
WE'LL SEE ABOUT THAT. GET BACK HERE.
12-13

Garfield®

By Jim Davis

Adam@home

By Bryan Basset


JINGLE BELLS, JINGLE BELLS...
WHAT'S WITH YOU AND THE SINGING THIS YEAR?
I GUESS I'M JUST FILLED WITH THE SPIRIT! I'M FULL OF JOY AND I NEED TO EXPRESS IT.
ALSO, MY CAR STEREO IS STUCK ON THAT HOLIDAY STATION.
OH, DEAR.
12/13

The Duplex

By Glenn McCoy

CROSSWORD

By Eugene Sheffer

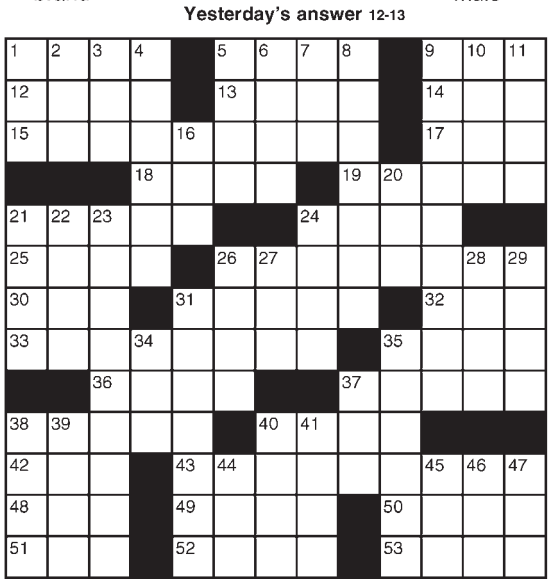
ACROSS
1 Tackles weeds
5 Pack (down)
9 "For shame!"
12 Nullify
13 Actor Sharif
14 Singer Sumac
15 Not hunt-and-peck
17 Bit of wit
18 Dove calls
19 Feudal superior
21 Skiers' mecca
24 Sod
25 "Ironside" star
26 Ant eater
30 Street address?
31 Liquefy
32 Bee follower
33 Net, as income
35 Give up
36 Sandwich cookie
37 Disinfectant brand
38 Pocket breads
40 Slightly open
42 Non-clerical
43 Pigeonholes, theatrically
48 Ref
49 Brewer's kiln
50 PBS science show
51 Fannie —
52 Russian refusal
53 Milky gem

DOWN
1 Grass shack
2 Lennon's lady
3 College URL ender
4 Mia Hamm's sport
5 Dorothy's dog
6 Adams and Irving
7 Atlas page
8 Chopin piece
9 Printing fonts
10 Overconfident
11 Welles role
16 Sweetie
20 Sportscaster Cross
21 "Waterloo" group
22 Ride the waves
23 Original model
24 Fearsome dinosaur
26 Car
27 Altar constellation
28 Make over
29 Fall (over)
31 Robert of "The Music Man"
34 Mound stat
35 He loved Roxane
37 Fond du —
38 Jack Horner's prize
39 "— Rock"
40 Church area
41 Joan of rock
44 "Rah!"
45 Soak (up)
46 FDR project
47 Erie Canal mule

Solution time: 24 mins.

P	A	N	G	■	S	O	L	■	M	I	A	S
E	S	P	R	E	S	S	O	■	Y	M	C	A
C	H	R	I	S	T	E	N	■	F	A	N	G
■	■	■	L	P	S	■	G	N	O	M	E	S
M	A	D	L	Y	■	S	H	O	O	■	■	■
E	R	R	S	■	S	H	O	R	T	E	N	■
W	E	E	■	K	E	I	R	A	■	T	O	Y
■	S	W	E	E	T	E	N	■	C	U	E	S
■	■	■	L	E	T	S	■	K	R	I	L	L
W	H	O	O	P	I	■	I	N	A	■	■	■
H	E	A	P	■	N	O	T	O	F	T	E	N
A	R	T	E	■	G	L	I	T	T	E	R	Y
T	O	S	S	■	S	E	N	■	S	A	G	E

Yesterday's answer 12-13



STUMPED? For answers to today's crossword, call **1-900-226-5955**! 99¢ per minute, touch-tone/rotary phones. (18+ only.) A King Features service, NYC.

CELEBRITIES BORN ON THIS DAY: Taylor Swift, 27; Jamie Foxx, 49; Wendie Malick, 66; Christopher Plummer, 87.

Happy Birthday: Put some energy and effort into your goals. Refuse to let anyone confuse or distract you. Set high standards and realistic goals, and don't back down regardless of criticism or difficult circumstances that come your way. Your strength and courage to strive for what you believe in and what you want will bring positive results. Your numbers are 1, 8, 14, 21, 25, 33, 47.

ARIES (*March 21-April 19*): Professional meetings, interviews and trips will help you bring about a positive response from those you do business with. The information you receive will encourage you to expand your interests and take on more responsibilities. Romance is highlighted. ✪✪✪✪

TAURUS (*April 20-May 20*): Physical ailments or injuries will slow you down. Strive to take better care of your health. Gather the knowledge that will help you make good decisions. Don't mix business with pleasure. Refuse to commit without a contract in place. ✪✪✪

GEMINI (*May 21-June 20*): You'll have the energy, fortitude and optimism to see your plan through to completion. Your passionate approach to bring about positive changes will give you the boost you need to go the distance. Romance is encouraged. ✪✪✪

CANCER (*June 21-July 22*): Refuse to let emotional matters influence your ability to take care of your responsibilities. It's important to concentrate on making sure you don't take on more than you can handle. Finish what you start and honor your promises. ✪✪✪

LEO (*July 23-Aug. 22*): Initiate change and do the work necessary to make things happen your way. Personal gains are within reach if you take action to update your investments and negotiate outdated contracts. Romance is on the rise and will improve your personal life. ✪✪✪✪

VIRGO (*Aug. 23-Sept. 22*): Problems at home will surface if you aren't forthright about the way you feel or what you want to pursue next. Don't hide your feelings when bringing them out into the open will help you get what you want. Accept the inevitable. ✪✪

LIBRA (*Sept. 23-Oct. 22*): Travel, meetings, educational pursuits and mingling with the people who inspire or motivate you are all favored. A day trip will result in a plan that can change your life. Romance is on the radar and should be pursued. ✪✪✪✪✪

SCORPIO (*Oct. 23-Nov. 21*): Money matters will create some controversy. Don't allow an emotional situation to turn into a costly affair. Dig deep and get the facts before you get involved in a joint venture that will leave you in a compromising position. ✪✪✪

SAGITTARIUS (*Nov. 22-Dec. 21*): Express your heartfelt desire to the people you feel you can count on, and you will be given the opportunity to pursue new beginnings. Broaden your horizons and you'll realize that you have options you didn't know existed. ✪✪✪

EUGENIA LAST

THE LAST WORD IN ASTROLOGY

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CAPRICORN (*Dec. 22-Jan. 19*): Learn from past emotional experiences. Before you say "yes," consider the desired outcome to ensure that the important details are baked into the final results. Don't let your ego interfere with what you know is the right move. ✪✪✪

AQUARIUS (*Jan. 20-Feb. 18*): You can gain ground at home. Real estate investments, renovations, moves or anything that pertains to upgrading your domestic environment will pay off. Romance is in the stars and will help secure your place in someone special's heart. ✪✪✪✪✪

PISCES (*Feb. 19-March 20*): Draw on your intuition and knowledge to help get you through any controversy. Problems with bosses, older friends or relatives will surface if you fall behind on your obligations. ✪✪

Birthday Baby: You are original, curious and daring. You are reliable and demanding.

*Eugenia's website—**eugenialast.com**, Eugenia's android app @ **http://bit.ly/exhoro** and join Eugenia on **twitter/facebook/linkedin**.*

SUDOKU

Conceptis Sudoku *By Dave Green*

	5		3	6	1			
3			9			5		
							8	
7	6			8				5
1								6
5				2			3	9
	2							
		1			9			3
			4	1	5		9	

Difficulty Level ★★ 12/13

Sudoku is a number-placing puzzle based on a 9x9 grid with several given numbers. The object is to place the numbers 1 to 9 in the empty squares so that each row, each column and each 3x3 box contains the same number only once. The difficulty level of the Conceptis Sudoku increases from Monday to Saturday.

Yesterday's SUDOKU Answer

4	8	2	9	7	1	5	6	3
3	1	5	6	8	4	2	7	9
9	7	6	2	5	3	8	1	4
1	9	4	7	2	8	6	3	5
6	3	7	4	1	5	9	2	8
2	5	8	3	6	9	7	4	1
8	2	9	1	3	7	4	5	6
5	6	3	8	4	2	1	9	7
7	4	1	5	9	6	3	8	2

Difficulty Level ★ 12/12

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WONDERWORD®

By DAVID OUELLET

HOW TO PLAY: All the words listed below appear in the puzzle — horizontally, vertically, diagonally and even backward. Find them, circle each letter of the word and strike it off the list. The leftover letters spell the WONDERWORD.

MINING IN ARGENTINA **Solution: 9 letters**

T	A	A	S	O	L	L	I	L	B	A	I	D	N	S
U	T	S	E	M	A	N	A	R	A	P	I	O	A	O
B	L	P	D	E	T	I	R	A	B	A	N	L	V	D
U	A	H	A	T	E	E	Y	O	T	F	I	O	I	I
H	S	A	R	R	M	A	R	O	U	N	M	M	D	U
C	A	L	T	I	L	E	M	E	A	E	U	I	A	M
A	M	T	T	C	D	I	L	S	S	X	S	T	D	C
T	D	I	A	A	T	A	G	C	O	P	P	E	R	A
A	E	T	L	E	R	R	E	A	A	O	Y	A	E	R
M	I	E	E	I	A	L	E	S	S	R	G	N	N	B
A	V	E	O	N	I	C	C	V	T	Ⓣ	Ⓘ	Ⓝ	I	O
R	L	J	D	N	O	U	I	E	L	B	R	A	M	N
C	A	E	D	U	A	R	A	M	Z	I	N	C	C	A
A	S	I	A	R	R	F	O	R	M	O	S	A	U	T
G	O	L	D	D	Z	C	A	B	O	D	R	O	C	E

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Asphaltite, Barite, Boron, Catamarca, Chubut, Clay, Copper, Cordoba, Crude, Diablillos, Diatomite, Dolomite, El Indio, Export, Formosa, Gas, Gold, Gypsum, La Rioja, Lead, Marble, Metal, Metric, Mica, Mine, Navidad, Nonfuel, Parana, Pascua, Salinas Grandes, Salta, Silver, Sodium Carbonate, Tale, Time, Tin, Trades, Veladero, Viedma, Zinc

Yesterday's Answer: Stickler

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CLASSIFIED ADS

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IN THE SUPERIOR COURT
OF THE
COMMONWEALTH OF THE NORTHERN MARIANA ISLANDS

Henry P. Manipon, Petitioner, vs. Lenibeth Crisostomo Manipon, Respondent,
) FCD-DI
) CIVIL ACTION NO. 16-0530
) **SUMMONS FOR PUBLICATION**

TO THE ABOVE NAME RESPONDENT:

YOU ARE HEREBY SUMMONED and notified to file any answer you wish to make to the Complaint, a copy of which is on file with the court, within thirty (30) days after service of the Summons upon you, and to deliver or mail a copy of your answer to the Petitioner whose address is PMB 309, P.O. Box 10001 as soon as practical after filing your answer or sending it to the Clerk of Courts for filing.

Your answer should be in writing and filed with the Clerk of this Court at P.O. Box 500307 Susupe, Saipan, MP 96950. It may be prepared for you by your counsel and sent to the Clerk of this Court by messenger or mail. It is not necessary for you to appear personally until further notice. If you fail to file an answer in accordance with this summons, judgment by default may be taken against you for relief in the complaint.

Dated this 26th day of October, 2016

/s/ Clerk of Court

LAW OFFICE OF LOREN A. SUTTON
MAC Building, Rm. 203
P.O. Box 5593 CHRB Chalan Laulau
Saipan MP 96950
Phone: 989 0627
Attorney for Defendant

IN THE SUPERIOR COURT
FOR THE
COMMONWEALTH OF THE NORTHERN MARIANA ISLANDS

RHODORA DLG ACEJO, Plaintiff VS. RAYMOND EVANGELISTA INDELECIO, Defendant
) FCD
) CV NO. 13-0413
) **NOTICE OF HEARING AND ORDER TO APPEAR**

TO: RAYMOND EVANGELISTA INDELECIO

You are ordered to appear before the Honorable Kenneth L. Govendo on December 19 2016, at 1:30 pm and there to show cause why you should not be held in contempt of Court for failing to pay child support as ordered by the Court of $200.00 per month ordered by the Court on May 19, 2014.

/s/ Deputy Court Clerk

ST. JUDE RENAL CARE FACILITY INC.
JOB VACANCY ANNOUNCEMENT

DIETITIAN

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- Has at least one year experience in clinical nutrition.
- Good interpersonal/communication skills.
- Must comply with the law and regulations of the state dietary or nutritional licensing body.

Interested applicants must submit resume or pick up an application at St. Jude Renal Care Facility Inc., at Chalan Kiya, Saipan. Deadline to submit resume/application will be December 16, 2016 at 4:00 p.m. For more information, please call (670) 234-2901 extension 128.

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Position is in Saipan, CNMI.

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Classified Ads

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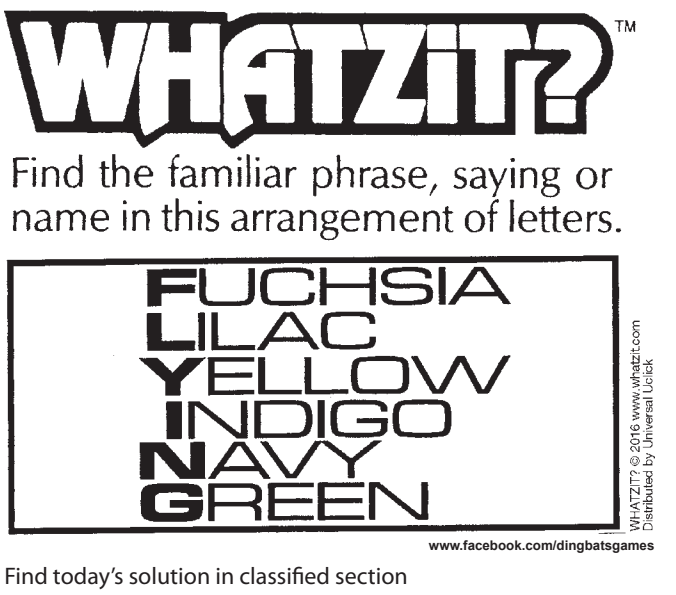


Find today's solution in classified section

Giants snap Cowboys' 11-game winning streak, 10-7

EAST RUTHERFORD, N.J. (AP)—With a no-huddle offense and no-fooling-around defense, the New York Giants snapped the Cowboys' 11-game winning streak with a 10-7 victory Sunday night, preventing Dallas from clinching the NFC East.

Dallas (11-2) hadn't lost since the season opener against the Giants (9-4), who solidified their position in the NFC playoff chase as the top wild card team. New York still hopes to catch Dallas in the division, and it can thank a stingy, aggressive defense for still having that opportunity.

Missing star defensive end Jason Pierre-Paul, the Giants couldn't stop rookie sensation Ezekiel Elliott from rushing for 107 yards. But New York's pressure stymied the other Cowboys rookie standout, quarterback Dak Prescott, blanked receiver Dez Bryant until 2:13 remained—he fumbled away the ball on that play—and held Dallas to one conversion in 15 third-down attempts.

The Giants had three sacks, continually made Prescott uncomfortable, and he threw two picks.

New York's offense was unsightly much of the night, blanked at halftime with only 84 net yards. Then it switched to the no-huddle and put together a short drive to Robbie Gould's 39-yard field goal, making it 7-3.

But Odell Beckham Jr., stepped up, as he often does, and sped through the Cowboys on a 61-yard touchdown play. Beckham caught Eli Manning's pass at the Giants 48 and raced all the way to the end zone for the lead the defense preserved.

Manning was 17 for 28 for 193 yards, one TD, one interception and two fumbles. His main adversary was linebacker Sean Lee, who had 18 tackles. Prescott finished 17 for 37 for 165 yards and a touchdown.

AP

Dallas Cowboys wide receiver Dez Bryant (88) fumbles the ball during the second half of an NFL football game as New York Giants' Janoris Jenkins (20) and Keenan Robinson (57) defend Sunday, Dec. 11, 2016, in East Rutherford, N.J.

Bengals 23, Browns 10

In Cleveland, Robert Griffin III returned from injury but couldn't keep Cleveland from falling closer to infamy as the Cincinnati Bengals built a big early lead and held off the winless Browns in the snow.

Andy Dalton threw two touchdown passes to Tyler Eifert as the Bengals (5-7-1) kept their playoff chances pulsating for another week.

Griffin started for the first time since getting hurt in the opener. He couldn't produce a win for the Browns (0-13).

RG3 did score on a 1-yard sneak in the third quarter, but the Browns lost their 16th straight dating to Dec. 13 last season. Cleveland has lost 23 of 24 and 31 of 34 since the end of 2014.

The Browns have three games left to avoid joining the 2008 Detroit Lions as the NFL's only 0-16 teams. They are making history with every loss. They are the seventh team since 1962 to start 0-13, joining the '08 Lions, 1980 Saints, 1976 Buccaneers, 2011 Colts, 2007 Dolphins and 1962 Raiders.

Buccaneers 16, Saints 11

In Tampa Bay, Fla., streaking Tampa Bay bolstered its playoff hopes by building an early lead and holding off Drew Brees and New Orleans for its fifth straight victory.

Doug Martin scored on a 1-yard run, Roberto Aguayo kicked three field goals and an improving defense intercepted Brees three times while holding the NFL passing leader without a touchdown pass.

Brees began the day leading the league in completions, attempts, completion percentage, passing yards and TD passes, but failed to throw for a touchdown for the second straight week, the first time he's done that in consecutive games since 2009.

Safety Keith Tandy picked off the quarterback's final pass on fourth-and-1 from near midfield in the final minute.

Titans 13, Broncos 10

In Nashville, Tenn., DeMarco Murray ran for 92 yards and a touchdown, and the Titans held on to and keep a piece of first place in the AFC South. With the win, the Titans (7-6) also climbed above .500 for the first time all season.

The Titans came in with the NFL's third-best rushing offense and the AFC's top runner in Murray, and they ran right over a Denver defense that came in 28th in that category. By halftime, the Titans ran 26 times for 138 yards — the second-most rushes by any team in the first half this season and most allowed in the first half by Denver since 2014.

Tennessee then had to hold on as Trevor Siemian tried to rally Denver (8-5) despite a sprained left foot that kept him out last week. He threw a 3-yard TD pass to Emmanuel Sanders with 9:58 left and drove the Broncos to first-and-goal at the Tennessee 7 before rookie Aaron Wallace sacked him.

Coach Gary Kubiak settled for a 34-yard field goal by Brandon McManus on fourth-and-goal at the 16 with 4:28 left.

Packers 38, Seahawks 10

In Green Bay, Wis., Aaron Rodgers passed for 246 yards and three touchdowns and Green Bay routed Seattle.

Seattle's Russell Wilson threw a career-high five interceptions and the Packers (7-6) won their third straight game to keep their playoff hopes alive.

They're two games back of first-place Detroit in the NFC North, but play division opponents in the last three weeks of the season.

Green Bay gained more than 300 yards in the first game for the Seahawks (8-4-1) without former All-Pro safety Earl Thomas, who is out for the season with a broken leg.

Redskins 27, Eagles 22

In Philadelphia, Chris Thompson's 25-yard touchdown run with 1:54 remaining lifted Washington. Kirk Cousins threw two touchdown passes, including an 80-yard toss to DeSean Jackson, and had a pick-6.

The Eagles took a 22-21 lead when Caleb Sturgis hit a 41-yard field goal with 4:59 left after holder Donnie Jones got the high snap from third-string long snapper Trey Burton down in time.

Carson Wentz drove Philadelphia to the Redskins 14 in the final minute, but Ryan Kerrigan sacked him to force a fumble and seal the win for Washington (7-5-1), which remained in the middle of a jumbled playoff race.

The Eagles (5-8) have lost four in a row and eight of 10 after a 3-0 start.

Steelers 27, Bills 20

In Orchard Park, N.Y., Le'Veon Bell scored three times and set a franchise record with 236 yards rushing in finding traction on a slick, snow-covered field.

The Steelers overcame three interceptions thrown by Ben Roethlisberger to win their fourth straight and improve to 8-5 and keep pace in the AFC playoff race. The loss all but mathematically eliminated the Bills (6-7) from contention, and puts them in jeopardy of extending the NFL's longest active playoff drought to 17 years—the longest since New Orleans ended a 20-year drought by reaching the postseason for their first time in 1987.

After scoring in the first half on 3- and 7-yard runs, Bell put the game away on the opening drive of the third quarter. He had nine rushes for 72 yards alone and capped the 82-yard drive by waltzing into the end zone from 5 yards .

Falcons 42, Rams 14

In Los Angeles, Matt Ryan passed for 237 yards and three touchdowns and Atlanta forced five turnovers to beat the Los Angeles.

Deion Jones returned an interception 33 yards for a touchdown, and Vic Beasley forced a fumble by Jared Goff and returned it for another TD during Atlanta's comprehensive pummeling of the Rams (4-9), who have lost four straight and eight of nine in their increasingly miserable homecoming season.

Tevin Coleman caught a TD pass and rushed for another score for the Falcons (8-5), who opened up a 42-point lead in the third quarter and stayed atop the NFC South with their fourth win in six games.

Vikings 25, Jaguars 16

In Jacksonville, Fla., Matt Asiata scored on a short touchdown run, Kai Forbath kicked four field goals and the Vikings won for just the second time in nine weeks.

Asiata had a chance to score three times, but he was stopped on a fourth-and-goal run in the second quarter and fumbled at the goal line in the fourth. Those mistakes hardly hurt against the hapless Jaguars (2-11), who dropped their eighth consecutive game and fell to 0-6 at EverBank Field this season.

Minnesota (7-6) hadn't won on the road since Sept. 25 at Carolina. A loss to the Jaguars would have weakened their playoff chances.

Sam Bradford completed 24 of 34 passes for 292 yards and a touchdown. His 3-yard TD toss to Kyle Rudolph with 2:13 remaining sealed the victory.

Texans 22, Colts 17

In Indianapolis, Lamar Miller scored Houston's only touchdown and the Texans defense stopped Andrew Luck on Indy's final drive. Houston (7-6) retained a share of the AFC South lead with Tennessee by ending its three-game losing streak.

The Texans won for the second straight year in Indy, have won nine straight against division foes and got their first sweep of the Colts in franchise history.

Luck drove the Colts (6-7) to the Texans 42-yard line with 1:24 left. But on fourth-and-1, a blitz forced an errant screen pass to Robert Turbin.

Panthers 28, Chargers 16

In Charlotte, N.C., Carolina's defense forced five turnovers by Philip Rivers and had five sacks and a safety.

Cam Newton was a pedestrian 10 of 27 for 160 yards with one touchdown pass and one interception for Carolina (5-8), which snapped a two-game losing streak and kept its slim playoff hopes alive. Jonathan Stewart ran for 66 yards and a touchdown and Graham Gano had four field goals.

But it was Carolina's defense that set the tone early — and later put the game away.

Despite playing without middle linebacker Luke Kuechly and defensive end Charles Johnson, the Panthers had four sacks on Rivers and forced three turnovers in the first half to build a 23-7 lead.

Dolphins 26, Cardinals 23

In Miami Gardens, Fla., Ryan Tannehill threw three touchdown passes before being sidelined with a knee injury, and Andrew Franks kicked a 21-yard field goal as time expired.

Tannehill limped to the locker room late in the third quarter after being hit around the legs by defensive tackle Calais Campbell as he released a completion. The Dolphins led 21-9 when Tannehill departed, and backup Matt Moore failed to lead Miami to a first down in his first three series.

The Cardinals mounted touchdown drives of 99 and 50 yards to tie the game, but Miami forced a punt to start at the Arizona 47 with 1:29 left. Moore threw a 12-yard completion to Kenny Stills for a first down, and then threw long to Stills for 29 yards to set up Franks' winning kick.

Lions 20, Bears 17

In Detroit, Matthew Stafford ran for a go-ahead, 7-yard touchdown with 3:17 left after throwing two interceptions in the fourth quarter, one that was returned for a score on the previous possession.

Matt Barkley completed two passes that put the Bears in a position to at least attempt a tying field goal in the final minute, but both were negated by penalties, before Chicago turned over the ball on downs from the Detroit 44.

The NFC North-leading Lions (9-4) have won five straight and eight of nine, moving them a step closer to winning a division title for the first time in 23 years.

Jets 23, 49ers 17, OT

In Santa Clara, Calif., Bilal Powell ran for 145 yards, including the game-ending 19-yard touchdown in overtime, to help Bryce Petty and New York rally from 14 points down.

Petty threw an interception on his first pass of the game and the Jets (4-9) trailed 14-0 less than 5 minutes into the game. San Francisco (1-12) led 17-3 at halftime, but fell flat after that and lost a franchise-worst 12th straight game.

Powell took over from there and scored his second TD of the game on New York's first possession of overtime after Petty's scramble and 26-yard pass to Robby Anderson put the Jets in field goal range.

No triple-double, but Westbrook leads Thunder past Celtics

OKLAHOMA CITY (AP)—Russell Westbrook's triple-double streak ended at seven games, but he finished the night with two things that meant more to him—a win and his long-lost shooting stroke.

Westbrook scored 23 of his 37 points in the second half to help the Oklahoma City Thunder defeat the Boston Celtics 99-96 on Sunday. He had 12 rebounds but only six assists, ending the NBA's longest triple-double run since Michael Jordan had seven straight in 1989.

Westbrook hadn't been satisfied. He shot just under 38 percent during the streak, and said after Friday's loss to Houston that it bothered him. Against the Celtics, he made 14 of 26 shots and finally found his rhythm.

"Just taking shots I wanted to take, that was the most important part," he said. "And playing from the block. That's the most important part. I talked to my dad this morning, and he got on me about not using that to my advantage, and I definitely tried to do more of that tonight."

Westbrook wasn't worried about the streak ending.

"Honestly, I'm just happy we won tonight," he said. "That's the most important thing. As a player, I always try to look forward. Maybe at the end of the season, I can talk about it, but as of right now, my job is to move forward and get ready for Portland."

Steven Adams scored 16 points on 7-for-8 shooting and Enes Kanter added 14 points for the Thunder, who have won seven of eight. Oklahoma City got away with making just 14 of 27 free throws.

Al Horford scored 19 points, and Jae Crowder and Avery Bradley each added 18 for the Celtics.

The Celtics controlled most of the first half and led 43-39 at halftime. It was Oklahoma City's lowest-scoring first half of the season.

The Celtics led by 13 in the third quarter, but the Thunder whittled their deficit to four by the end of the period.

Westbrook made a driving layup with 30.6 seconds left to give the Thunder a 96-94 lead. Westbrook then won a jump ball with Bradley to start a fast break, and Jerami Grant finished it with a dunk that put Oklahoma City up 98-94 with 14.4 seconds to play.

Marcus Smart scored in close for Boston to make it 98-96. Westbrook made the first of two free throws with 5.1 seconds left to leave the door open, but Smart's 3-pointer for the tie bounced away as time expired.

"I think we just stopped moving the ball," Bradley said. "We took some bad shots. We weren't able to score the ball. If we continued to play the way we had, we could

Warriors 116, Timberwolves 108

In Minneapolis, Klay Thompson scored 30 points and Golden State roared back to beat Minnesota and avoid its first set of consecutive regular-season losses since 2015.

Stephen Curry had 22 points and nine assists, and the Warriors extended their NBA-record streak to 111 regular-season games without losing two in a row. They trailed by 10 to start the fourth quarter, but opened the period with a 25-4 avalanche to turn the tide.

Karl-Anthony Towns had 25 points and 18 rebounds, and Andrew Wiggins scored 25 for the Timberwolves (6-18), who lost their fourth straight game.

Kevin Durant had 22 points on 6-for-21 shooting, and Draymond Green scored 18 for Golden State.

Zach LaVine scored 25 points and hit five 3s for the Wolves.

The Warriors were coming off a 21-point loss Saturday to the Grizzlies and were playing their fourth game in five nights.

76ers 97, Pistons 79

In Auburn Hills, Mich., Robert Covington had 16 points and Philadelphia beat Detroit for its second consecutive road victory after going nearly a year without one.

Ersan Ilyasova added 15 points for the 76ers, who had matched a franchise record by losing 23 straight games away from home before beating New Orleans last Thursday night. That was Philadelphia's first road win since Jan. 20 last season at Orlando.

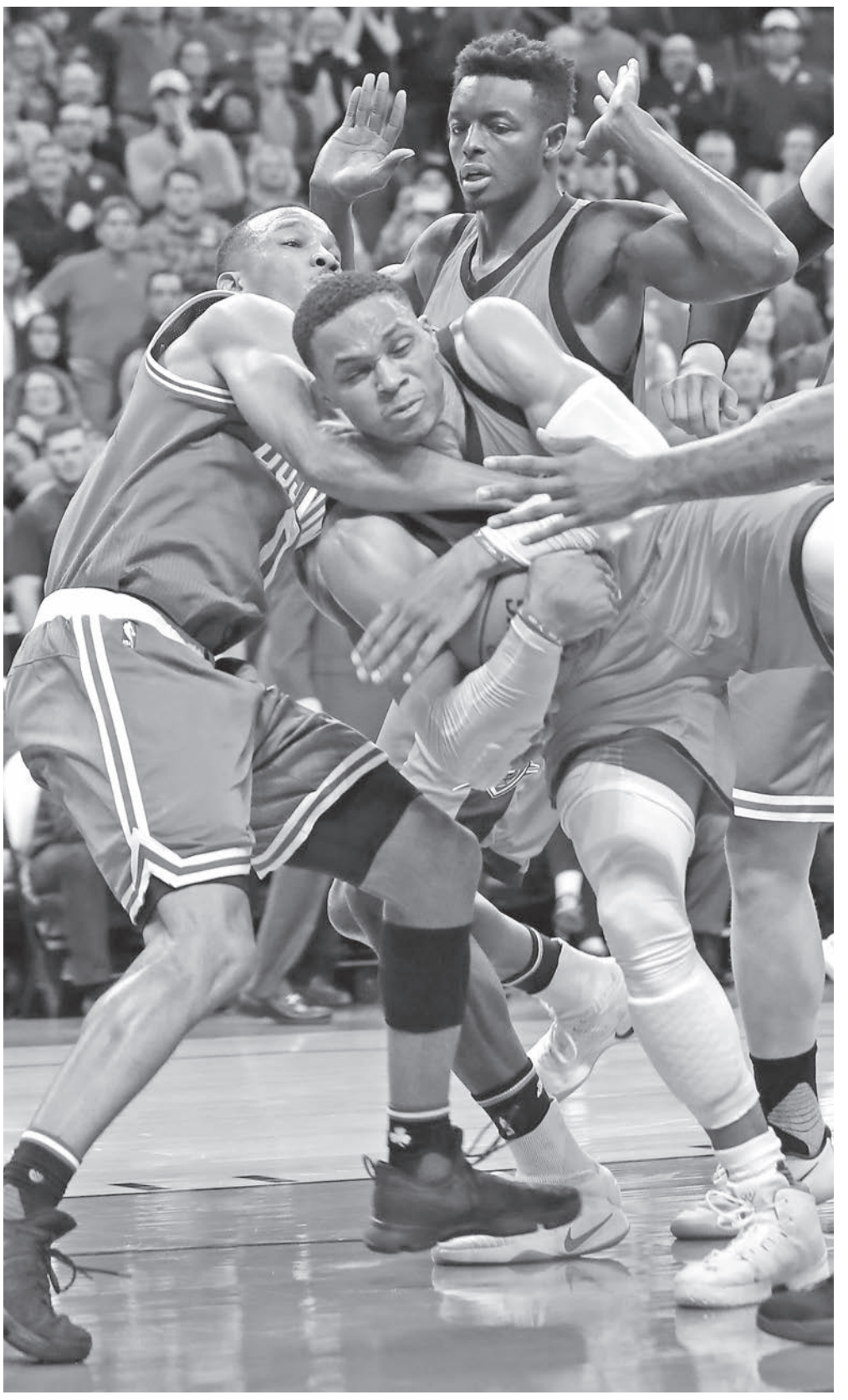
Jahlil Okafor had 14 points and nine rebounds, and T.J. McConnell added 12 points, 10 rebounds and nine assists for the 76ers (6-18), who snapped a four-game losing streak against the Pistons and improved to 2-7 on the road this season.

Marcus Morris scored 28 points and Andre Drummond finished with 14 points and 14 rebounds for Detroit.

Pelicans 120, Suns 119, OT

In Phoenix, Tim Frazier got his first career triple-double and New Orleans rallied from a 15-point second-half deficit to beat Phoenix in overtime, snapping a five-game losing streak.

The victory came despite a 4-for-17 shooting performance by NBA scoring leader Anthony Davis. He finished with 14 points, 16 below his average, but grabbed 12 rebounds.



AP

Boston Celtics guard Avery Bradley, left, and Oklahoma City Thunder guard Russell Westbrook, right, tussle for a loose ball during the second half of an NBA basketball game in Oklahoma City, Sunday, Dec. 11, 2016.

Eric Bledsoe scored 32 for the Suns. Tyson Chandler added 14 points and 21 rebounds, both season highs.

Frazier, a third-year guard out of Penn State, had 14 points, a career-high 11 rebounds and 11 assists. He made one of two free throws with 3.6 seconds left to put the Pelicans up 120-116.

Jrue Holiday hit four free throws in the final 14.3 seconds and scored 23 points.

Knicks 118, Lakers 112

In Los Angeles, Kristaps Porzingis had 26 points and 12 rebounds, Derrick Rose scored 25 in his return from injury and New York held off Los Angeles for its sixth win in seven games.

Brandon Jennings scored 15 of his season high-tying 19 points in the fourth quarter as the Knicks moved a season-best four games over .500 (14-10) with a dynamic effort in the final minutes, capped by Rose's jumper with 19.4 seconds left.

Lou Williams scored 24 points in his latest big game off the bench for the sliding Lakers, who lost their sixth straight despite the return of D'Angelo Russell and Nick Young.

Rose went 12 for 16 after missing two games with a back injury. Porzingis has been feeling discomfort in his right knee, but the Latvian big man shook it off and blocked seven shots, tying his career high.

Manslaughter conviction in death of ex-NFL star Will Smith

NEW ORLEANS (AP)—The man who fatally shot retired New Orleans Saints defensive leader Will Smith was convicted of manslaughter on Sunday night, ending a week-long trial in which the defendant insisted he only fired because the popular football star was drunk, violent and had grabbed a gun following a traffic crash on the night of April 9.

Smith was part of the Saints team that lifted the stricken city's spirits in the years after Hurricane Katrina hit in 2005, helping carry the team to a winning season in 2006 and a Super Bowl win four years later. His death at the hands of Cardell Hayes, 29, was stunning, even for a city where residents are accustomed to reports of multiple gunfire deaths every week.

Hayes faces a possible sentence of up to 40 years in prison at his sentencing on Feb. 17. Jurors opted for the lesser charge rather than second-degree murder, which would have carried a mandatory life sentence.

Hayes also was convicted of attempted manslaughter for wounding Smith's wife, Racquel Smith.

"Because of the upcoming sentencing hearing, in which Racquel will provide a victim impact statement, she does not feel it is appropriate to comment on the facts of the case at this time," her lawyer said in an emailed news release. "The main focus of Will Smith's family is to see Mr. Hayes justly sentenced for the murder he so callously committed."

Hayes' family members and friends exited the court without commenting.

"We respect the jury's verdict ... we'll regroup tomorrow and see what the next approach is. We continue to pray for all families."

District Attorney Leon Cannizzaro said in a news release that he would have a news conference Monday.

Saints coach Sean Payton arrived at the courthouse and was present for the late Sunday verdict. Earlier, former Saints safety Steve Gleason, battling Lou Gehrig's disease, watched hours of closing arguments from his wheelchair in a center aisle of the courtroom. They were among a host of past and present Saints stars, including current quarterback Drew Brees and former running back Deuce McAllister, who attended proceedings at different points during the week.

That was one reason Fuller had cautioned jurors Sunday against being "star-struck" by the NFL luminaries.

Hayes' defense lawyers said Smith's popularity led to a rush to judgment by police and prosecutors.

"I knew for a fact that I was going to get shot," Hayes told the jury after taking the stand in his own defense Saturday. He said he not only saw the gun but heard what he believes was a gunshot before he began firing.

Hayes, however, was the only witness to say Smith armed himself that night. Prosecutors acknowledged that a loaded gun was found in Smith's car but said there was no evidence that it was ever fired or that Smith had grabbed it.

Angels acquire infielder Espinosa in trade with Nationals

WASHINGTON (AP)—The Los Angeles Angels acquired middle infielder Danny Espinosa from the Washington Nationals for two minor league pitchers Saturday night.

The Angels sent right-handers Austin Adams and Kyle McGowin to the Nationals for Espinosa, who presumably lost his starting job when Washington obtained outfielder Adam Eaton from the Chicago White Sox on Wednesday.

Washington traded three top pitching prospects to Chicago for Eaton, with the intention of shifting NL Rookie of the Year runner-up Trea Turner from center field back to his natural position at shortstop.

AP
In this Oct. 9, 2016, file photo, Washington Nationals shortstop Danny Espinosa (8) fields a ground ball during Game 2 of baseball's National League Division Series against the Los Angeles Dodgers in Washington.

The 29-year-old Espinosa hit .209 with a career-high 24 home runs and 72 RBIs as Washington's starting shortstop last season, helping the team win the NL East. In seven major league seasons, all with the Nationals, the switch-hitter has batted .226 with 92 homers and 285 RBIs.

Los Angeles has a two-time Gold Glove winner at shortstop in Andrelton Simmons, though his career OPS is just .671. Espinosa, however, could fill a void at second base for the Angels, providing an upgrade with some much-needed power from the left side of the plate.

Espinosa was previously Washington's second baseman but moved to shortstop after the club signed Daniel Murphy last offseason. Espinosa is considered a better fielder than hitter and has particularly struggled in the postseason, batting .091 in three playoff series.

In the 2016 playoffs, Espinosa struck out eight times in 18 plate appearances.

McGowin was ranked as the Angels' 20th-best prospect by MLB.com, the Nationals said. He started 27 games in Double-A and Triple-A in 2016, posting a 5.83 ERA.

Adams is a reliever who has a 3.75 ERA in 166 minor league appearances.

Former top draft pick Phil Bickford suspended 50 games

NEW YORK (AP)—Milwaukee right-hander Phil Bickford, the 18th overall pick in baseball's 2015 amateur draft, has been suspended for the first 50 games of next season following a second positive test for a drug of abuse under the sport's minor league drug program. Bickford, 21, is on the roster of Milwaukee's Class A Carolina Mudcats of the Carolina League. He signed with the San Francisco for a $2,333,800 bonus and was traded at this year's Aug. 1 deadline to the Brewers along with catcher Andrew Susac for left-hander Will Smith. Bickford was 7-7 with a 2.93 ERA in 22 starts and one relief appearance for three Class A teams this year, striking out 135 in 120 innings. He pitched in the All-Star Futures Game in San Diego. In addition, Toronto right-hander Pedro Loficial was suspended for 72 games following a positive test for metabolites of Stanozolol and Miami outfielder Casey Soltis was banned 50 games following a second positive test for a drug of abuse. Loficial, 21, was 1-0 with a 1.35 ERA in three relief appearances and 6 2/3 innings for the Dominican Summer League Blue Jays. The 21-year-old Soltis, a fifth-round pick in 2014, hit .190 this year in 52 games at Class A Greensboro of the South-Atlantic League. Major League Baseball announced the discipline Friday. There have been 95 suspensions this year under the minor league drug program and 13 under the major league program.

NEWCOMER

From Page 28

than a day before fight night. The Trench Tech veteran then held his own against the solid punches of Naputi in the first round, connecting several strikes that wobbled his foe a bit.

The exchanges continued in the second round with Naputi getting more points late in the match as he cornered Nuique and peppered him with punches to the body and face. Nuique then got out of trouble and tried to bring the fight to the ground, but Naputi got up and unloaded a few more punches to the former, who eventually waved the white flag before the start of the final round.

Meanwhile, another first-timer—Jesse "The 6 Shooter MMA" Mesa—won his debut on the octagon cage.

Mesa prevailed in the opening MMA fight of the night that had Frank "The Crank" Camacho showing professionalism after a bizarre turn of events on the eight sides. Mesa, after getting hit by an illegal kick from Andres "The Tanapag Beach Bad Boy" Camacho of BadAss Beach Boys, got up disoriented and threw wayward punches on "The Crank." The third man on the ring was hit by the few early strikes from Mesa, dodged the next ones, and was hit by a left straight before he embraced the latter's head and stopped him from throwing more punches.

Mesa was awarded the victory just 16 seconds into Round 1 due to disqualification on Andres Camacho, who floored the former with a right cross and still went for a left kick with his foe already down.

In other results, the rematch and lone kickboxing bout between Vince "The Clinch" Masga and Derrick "El Peligro" Rangamar ended in a draw.

DIAZ

From Page 28

Party last Sunday at the Philcom Pavilion in Susupe.

Elmer Esdrelon, also of Ali'i Blue Haus/Bayani, was named to the Mythical Team along with 8th Division's Alex Lauron and Kelvin Fitial, Best Sunshine International-Blue Eagle's Douglas Schmidt, and PC Bargain/Visminda's James Villacrusis.

Villacrusis got two awards, as he was named the scoring champion of the league after collecting 219 points in the single round-robin elimination and averaging 27.37 per match. The PC Bargain gunner defeated Cavite's Preston Basa (23.50 ppg) and Save More's Sid Quan (19.62 ppg).

Schmidt failed to finish in the Top 3 in scoring after missing one game in the regular season, but the BSI-Blue Eagle key player had the most awards in the league as he topped the steals department and was handed the Most Behaved and Disciplined Player trophy. Schmidt had 39 steals in the regular season to average 4.87 per match. He was way ahead of 8th Division's Amor Zapata (26) and Esdrelon (16).

Esdrelon led the league in assists with his 35 to win his second award, while Quan and Schmidt, who had 24 each, and Armatech's Bernard Montano (21) joined him in the Top 3.

Basa failed to get the scoring champion title, but he reigned supreme in the 3-point shooting after converting 46 shots from the parking lot. Stephen's Pawnshop's James Abuy was ranked second with his 29 triples, while Villacrusis came in at third with his 23.

In the rebounds department, Quan lorded it over in the nine-team field after recording 97. He was the runaway winner, as Fitial and BSI-Blue Eagle's Tony Raho, had only 68 and 67, respectively. In the blocks division, Armatech's Jerome Malasarte defeated BSI-Blue Eagle's Brady Hammond, 8-7. Fitial led four other players with six blocks apiece.

LADY

From Page 28

sued for an early timeout, hoping to stop the Lady Knight's strong start, however Reyes and company kept going in the first quarter. By the end of the first 10 minutes of play, Mt. Carmel was enjoying a 19-1 advantage, thanks to Reyes' 11 points and 6 from Villagomez. Sophia Cruz gave Tinian its lone point in the first quarter after splitting her charities.

Tinian continued to struggle offensively in the second quarter, while the Lady Knights' offense also slowed down as coaches Catherine and Mark Toves brought in their second and third stringers at the start of that period.

"We want to give our young players more exposure since two (Travilla and Reyes) of our key players are on their last year with the team," Catherine said.

With the Lady Knights' starters out, Tinian sliced the deficit to single digits at the break, 13-22. Tinian finally nailed its first field goal at the 7:24 mark of the second canto off Cruz's undergoal stab and she made one more basket, while Karrie San Nicolas, Thia King, and Nicole Clamor also hit the board. Travilla, who reported back to the match late in the second canto, knocked in a triple for the team's lone basket in that period.

"Despite scoring only one basket in the second quarter, we told the girls just to keep their focus on the game and not mind the scores. Just keep playing as a team and do their best every time they are on the floor," Catherine said.

At the start of the second half, the trio of Reyes, Travilla, and Villagomez joined forces anew and finished off Tinian to keep the Lady Knights' flawless record in the one-day tournament. Mt. Carmel defeated Saipan Southern High School, 39-16, and MHS, 27-16, to move into the finals.

Despite their earlier easy victories, the husband-and-wife tandem kept reminding their players not to be complacent.

"We learned our lessons from the TanHoldings holiday tournament and Settsu-Saipan competition. We were playing so good in the preliminary games only to get eliminated in the playoffs," Catherine said.

The Lady Knights lost to Sun Palace in the semis of the TanHoldings holiday caging, 40-46, and to MHS in the Settsu tournament, 26-32.

"Before each game, we kept reminding our players to focus on the match we are playing. Regardless, if we are ahead by a big margin or behind by just 1 we have to keep playing our game. We have to be mentally prepared for every game, whether we are facing a strong team or not," Catherine added.

The Lady Knights coach also tipped her hat to Tinian for showing a lot of heart and discipline during the tournament.

"They came down to play the whole day and played their hearts out every match. I hope we could see more from them in future tournaments," Catherine said.

The MCS players and coaches also would like to thank PSS and the tournament organizers for inviting the Lady Knights to the competition.

MCS 45 — Reyes 24, Travilla 13, Villagomez 8.

THS 25 — Cruz 7, San Nicolas 6, T. King 4, Rosimo 4, R. King 3, Clamor 1.

Scoring by quarters: 19-1, 22-13, 28-18, 45-25.

TRIBUNE SPORTS SCORES

NBA STANDINGS

EASTERN CONFERENCE

Atlantic Division

	W	L	Pct	GB
Toronto	16	7	.696	—
New York	14	10	.583	2½
Boston	13	11	.542	3½
Brooklyn	6	16	.273	9½
Philadelphia	6	18	.250	10½

Southeast Division

Charlotte	14	10	.583	—
Atlanta	12	12	.500	2
Washington	9	13	.409	4
Orlando	10	15	.400	4½
Miami	7	17	.292	7

Central Division

Cleveland	17	5	.773	—
Chicago	13	10	.565	4½
Milwaukee	11	11	.500	6
Detroit	13	13	.500	6
Indiana	12	12	.500	6

WESTERN CONFERENCE

Southwest Division

San Antonio	19	5	.792	—
Houston	17	7	.708	2
Memphis	17	8	.680	2½
New Orleans	8	17	.320	11½
Dallas	5	18	.217	13½

Northwest Division

Oklahoma City	15	9	.625	—
Utah	15	10	.600	½
Portland	12	13	.480	3½
Denver	9	15	.375	6
Minnesota	6	18	.250	9

Pacific Division

Golden State	21	4	.840	—
L.A. Clippers	17	7	.708	3½
L.A. Lakers	10	16	.385	11½
Sacramento	8	15	.348	12
Phoenix	7	17	.292	13½

NFL STANDINGS

AMERICAN CONFERENCE

East

	W	L	T	Pct	PF	PA
New England	10	2	0	.833	319	207
Miami	8	5	0	.615	281	301
Buffalo	6	7	0	.462	325	301
N.Y. Jets	4	9	0	.308	229	324

South

Houston	7	6	0	.538	229	274
Tennessee	7	6	0	.538	321	306
Indianapolis	6	7	0	.462	328	333
Jacksonville	2	11	0	.154	240	338

North

Pittsburgh	8	5	0	.615	317	256
Baltimore	7	5	0	.583	256	207
Cincinnati	5	7	1	.423	268	269
Cleveland	0	13	0	.000	207	375

West

Kansas City	10	3	0	.769	302	255
Oakland	10	3	0	.769	358	320
Denver	8	5	0	.615	296	242
San Diego	5	8	0	.385	350	347

NATIONAL CONFERENCE

East

	W	L	T	Pct	PF	PA
x-Dallas	11	2	0	.846	340	238
N.Y. Giants	9	4	0	.692	255	244
Washington	7	5	1	.577	330	317
Philadelphia	5	8	0	.385	290	272

South

Atlanta	8	5	0	.615	428	345
Tampa Bay	8	5	0	.615	293	296
New Orleans	5	8	0	.385	358	351
Carolina	5	8	0	.385	311	337

North

Detroit	9	4	0	.692	295	268
Green Bay	7	6	0	.538	333	312
Minnesota	7	6	0	.538	258	225
Chicago	3	10	0	.231	221	290

West

Seattle	8	4	1	.654	274	232
Arizona	5	7	1	.423	299	277
Los Angeles	4	9	0	.308	194	304
San Francisco	1	12	0	.077	251	393

x-clinched playoff spot

BY THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Trench Warz 20: Full Throttle

PHOTOS By ROSELYN B. MONROYO

Stanley "The Raging Bull" Iakopo, right, holds on to the arm of Guam's Rob "The Real Deal" Wusstig during their lightweight title bout in the Trench Warz 20: Full Throttle at the Marianas Business Plaza last Friday.

Guam's Rob "The Real Deal" Wusstig is declared the winner of his lightweight title bout against Stanley "The Raging Bull" Iakopo.

L.J. Naputi, right, connects a punch to Mark "The Dark" Nuique's head.

Guam's Joey Crisostimo, left, kicks Nick Cruz on the face.

Referee Mike Ulloa steps in to break up Juan "Hot Pocket" Lizama, top, and Andrew "Top Gun" Sablan.

Mark "The Dark" Nuique, right, keeps an eye on L.J. Naputi.

Guam's Joseph Camacho unleashes punches on K.J. Villagomez.

Juan "Hot Pocket" Lizama, top, tries to keep his hold on Andrew "Top Gun" Sablan.

Giants snap Cowboys' 11-game winning streak, 10-7

PAGE 24

Saipan Tribune
Sports

No triple-double, but Westbrook leads Thunder past Celtics

PAGE 25

Lady Knights take HS cage title

By ROSELYN B. MONROYO
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REPORTER

Mt. Carmel School capped its perfect run in the 2016 Public School System Basketball Tournament with a 45-25 domination of Tinian High School in their title game last Friday at the Gilbert C. Ada Gymnasium.

Karleen Reyes, Jan Travilla, and Jennifer Villagomez provided the needed offense for the Knights to power their team to the finals victory. Reyes scored a game-high 24 points, while Travilla and Villagomez added 13 and 8, respectively.

The Lady Knights were all business in the championship showdown, giving Tinian no chance at all to force another game in the battle for the high school crown. Mt. Carmel had a twice-to-beat advantage going into the title duel after winning its first two games in the winner's bracket. Tinian, on the other hand, came out of the loser's bracket, stunning Marianas High School, 48-43, in the battle for the last finals seat to foil the anticipated Lady Knights-Lady Dolphins title encounter.

Mt. Carmel opened the finals with a 6-0 run off Reyes, Travilla, and Villagomez's fastbreak baskets. Tinian then

See LADY on Page 26

ROSELYN B. MONROYO
Two Mt. Carmel School players battle a Tinian High School player for a rebound during their championship game in the 2016 Public School System Basketball Tournament last Friday at the Gilbert C. Ada Gymnasium.

Diaz gets Finals MVP

By ROSELYN B. MONROYO
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REPORTER

Former CNMI National Team player Ed Diaz earned the Finals MVP award in the 2016 UFO/IT&E Inter-Organizational Basketball League after helping Ali'i Blue Haus/Bayani beat 8th Division/MAFEA, 78-62, in their championship game last week at the Gilbert C. Ada Gymnasium.

Diaz had a double-double in the finals as he scored 18 points and hauled 13 rebounds. The Marianas Visitors Authority employee also recorded two assists, two steals, and a block for an all-around game. He made 8 of his points in the final quarter, including 6 straight markers that ended 8th Division's hopes for a comeback win.

Diaz and other individual and team awardees in the league were recognized during UFO's Christmas

See DIAZ on Page 26

ROSELYN B. MONROYO
Ali'i Blue Haus/Bayani's Ed Diaz uses the board for a shot against 8th Division/MAFEA's Amor Zapata during in their championship game last week at the Gilbert C. Ada Gymnasium.

Newcomer tops veteran in Trench Warz 20

By ROSELYN B. MONROYO
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REPORTER

Larry "The Pain" Naputi won his MMA debut after beating Mark "The Dark" Nuique in the Trench Warz 20: Full Throttle held last Friday at the Marianas Business Plaza.

Naputi engaged Nuique in a standup fight, winning the exchange of punches as the latter opted to verbally submit to the former before the start of the third and last round of their action-packed 155-lb bout. Nuique sustained a couple of lumps to his face, while blood also flowed from his nose midway in the second round after taking too much punishment from Naputi.

Despite yet another loss, Nuique, who fell to a 9-6 win-loss record and still winless this season, the Trench Tech fighter put up a gallant stand against the debuting Naputi. Nuique, whose nine wins included five via TKO, accepted the invite to face Naputi less

See NEWCOMER on Page 26

ROSELYN B. MONROYO
Referee Mike Ulloa, center, raises the arm of Larry "The Pain" Naputi, left, after winning against Mark "The Dark" Nuique in the Trench Warz 20: Full Throttle held last Friday at the Marianas Business Plaza.